30 GAMES REVIEWED!

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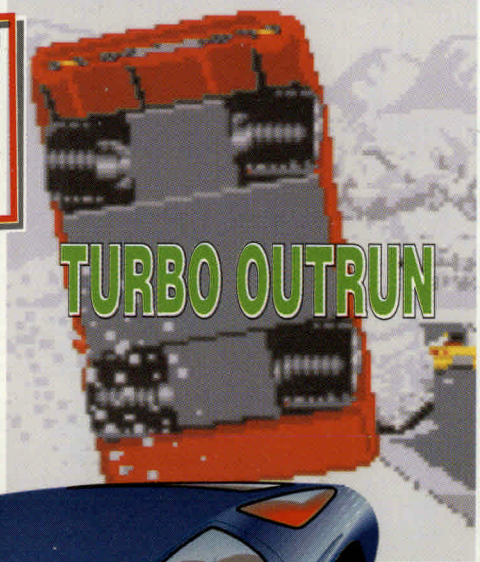
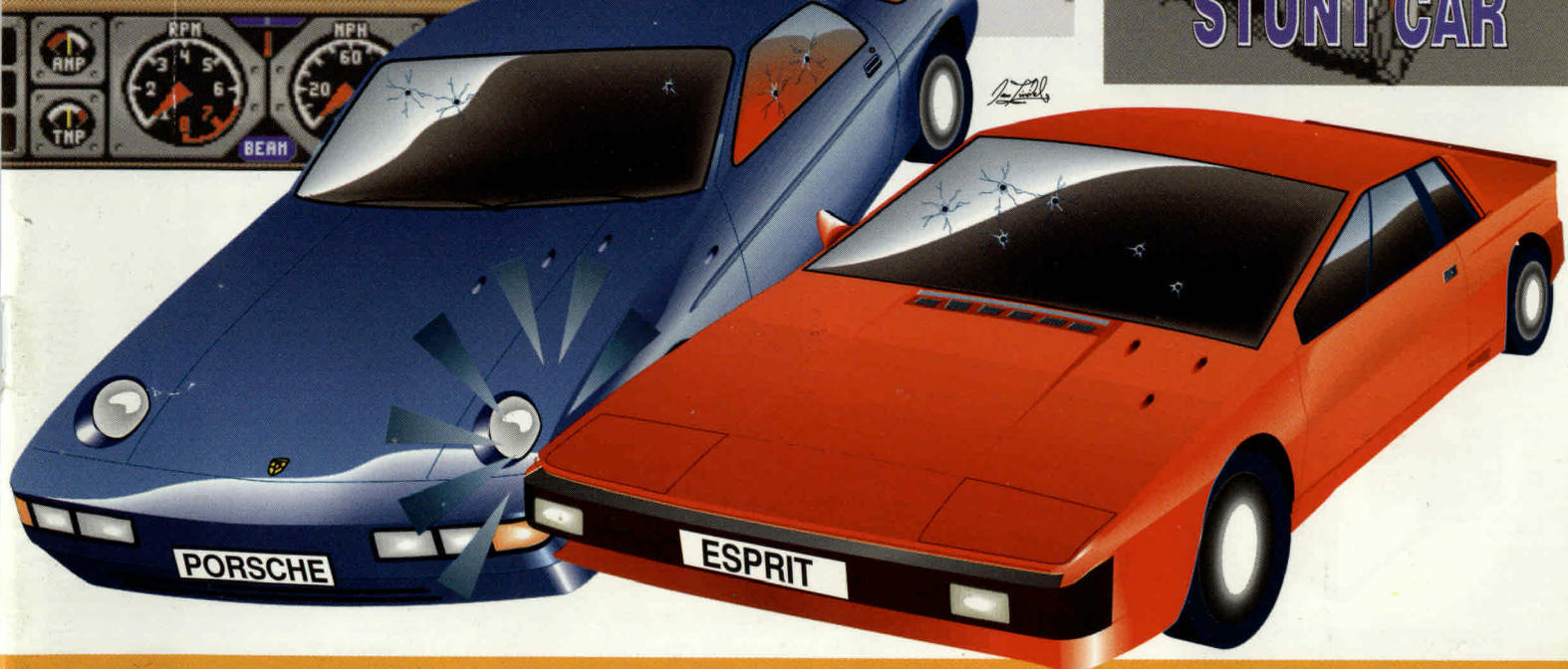
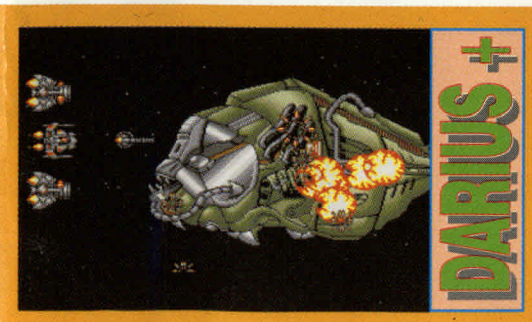


TURBO OUTRUN

STUNT CAR





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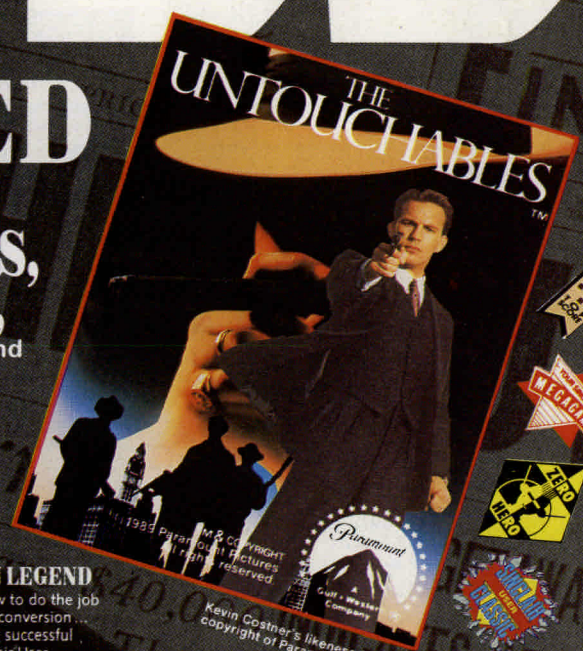
"a fine example of how to do the job properly ... a cracking conversion ... easily one of the most successful licences to date" Sinclair User



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IT CAME FROM THE DESERT

Cinemaware's finest hour hits the Amiga, as a strange meteor from the depths of space has a strange effect on Lizard's Breath's Wildlife.

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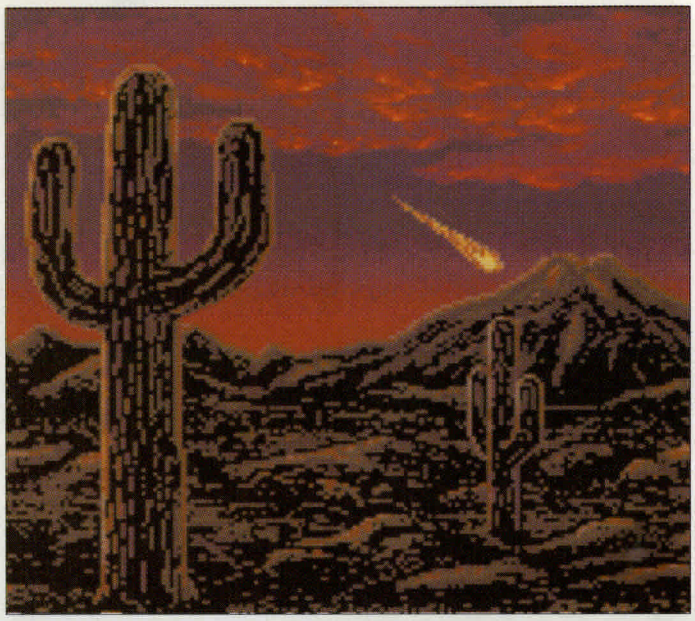

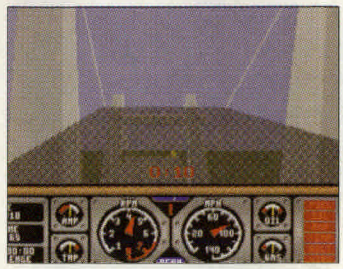

HARD DRIVIN'

Bringing realistic car action to the Amiga, Hard Drivin' arrives. Amiga Action takes it for a test drive.

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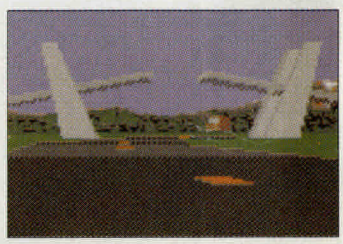

SIM CITY

In a similar vein to Populous, Sim City gives you total control over a massive city - are you Mayor material?

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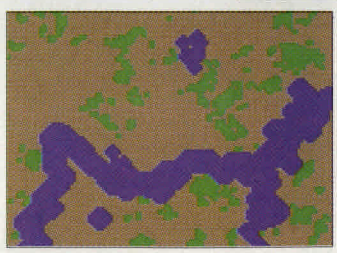

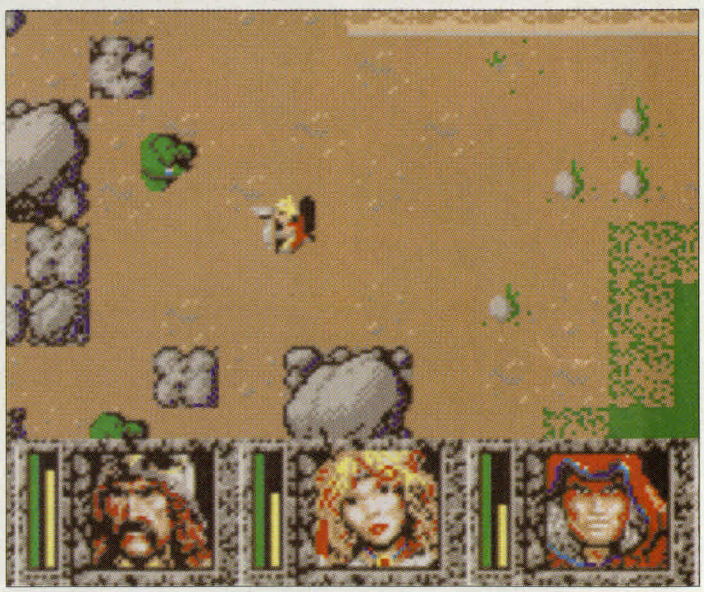

DRAGONS OF FLAME

The follow up to Heroes Of The Lance arrives at last, and features a novel control system, and a larger, deeper task.

60

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AMIGA ACTION
OVERALL RATING
100%

MANIAC MANSION

Eek! The delectable Sandy has been kidnapped and strapped to a brain-draining machine! Prepare to rescue her!

82

Here's to the next ten years!

As we enter 1990, a lot of us have been wondering what to expect. Will CDI become as popular and accessible as people are saying? Will consoles become as big as they did in the days of the 4K VCS? If so, what will happen to the Amiga? However, despite the uncertainty of the future, it can be guaranteed that within the next few years, Amiga games are going to experience the change they did in the 64 or the Spectrum. When Sir Clive's Spectrum arrived, who would have though that within three or so year, owners would be marvelling at revolutionary games, such as Knight Lore and Elite? When you consider that the Amiga is still in its infancy when it comes to games, if we are getting used to games of the quality of It Came From The Desert and the like, what will we be playing in 1993 - surely, the advances will be even better. Whatever happens, Amiga Action will be there, and, let's face it, it's going to be fun!

CHASE HQ

Ocean's conversion of the smash-hit Taito coin-op proves to be every bit as playable as the superb arcade game.

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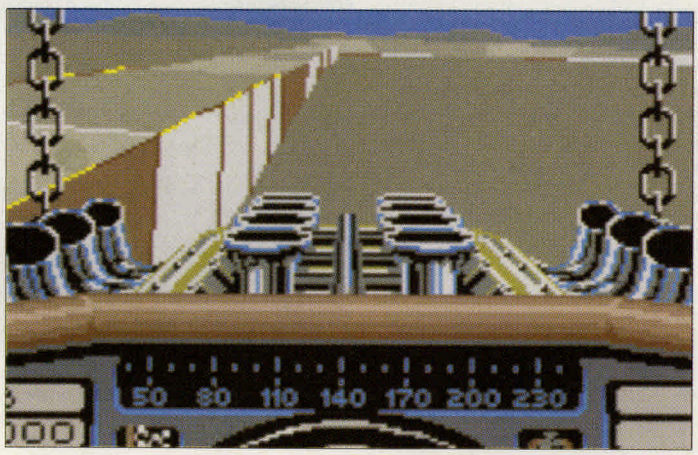


STUNT CAR RACER

Geoff Crammond, programmer of the innovative Sentinel, returns with a superb one or two-player race game. Check it out!

68

CHAMBERS OF SHAOLIN

The first release from the Grandslam/Thalion deal, Chambers Of Shaolin, proves itself to be one of the better beat' em-ups. Amiga Action puts it to the test.

90

WIN MORE GREAT PRIZES

Well, a few anyway! To celebrate the release of games, such as Populous and Interceptor, EA are offering a brilliant Sony TV/monitor, as well as numerous games for the thirty runners-up. Well, what are you waiting for?

16

SNIPPETS

Following the announcement that Grandslam are releasing the 16-bit versions of Space Harrier II, here are the first Amiga screenshots of the said project.

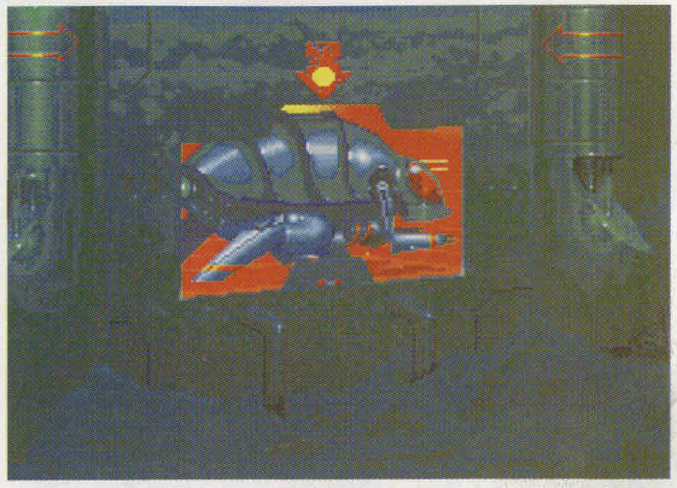
SPACE HARRIER RETURNS

Taking not quite as long as the original Space Harrier to be converted to the Amiga, Space Harrier II has already been started, and, in fact, is almost finished. Coming from the hydraulic version that appeared in the arcades about two years ago, you play the part of a brave young man equipped with a jet pack who zooms across the various planet surfaces while being attacked by wave after wave of enemy monsters. The enemy in each level scroll towards you, as in the first game, only this time they are larger, meaner and deadlier! In addition, there are more of the large guardians to battle, and contact with any of the hostile forces or their plentiful supply of bullets, must be avoided or you will killed and thrown backwards with a digitised grunt! Although we mentioned Space Harrier II a couple of issues back, there weren't actually any Amiga screenshots at that time, but now the game is coming to the final stages we can give you an example of what to expect. As you can see, so far it looks surprisingly close to the arcade version. Again, this is another game that won't arrive until the new year and it will cost £19.95. Expect a review next month.

Although the action is almost exactly the same as that of the first game in the series, Space Harrier II promises some fast-paced action.

PREPARE FOR AN X-ITING OUTING FROM RAINBOW ARTS

At a time when top-class shoot'em-ups are becoming more common each month, Rainbow Arts are proud to unveil their entry to the already-crowded space lanes - X-Out. The main difference between X-Out and its competitors is that you choose your weapons at the start of the game instead of collecting them as you battle through the many levels, and this means that you can learn from experience as you play. Aside from this novel addition to the genre, X-Out is a pure and simple blast, and comes complete with wave after wave of deadly aliens, and the usual end-of-level guardians. However, the game plays at such a fast speed that it looks set to become one of the better blasters. At present, the game exists in the form of a two-level demo, and, although we were given the go-ahead to review the completed stages, we felt that we couldn't give a fair estimation on the game's lasting appeal, as we whizzed through both levels in no time at all. That said, what we have seen is quite impressive, especially the organic end-of-level guardians, and the weapon selection screen at the start of the game is quite impressive. In all, there will be something in the range of a dozen or so levels, but you'll have to wait until next month to see how it fares in the hands of the Amiga Action reviewers.



X-Out opens with a superb graphic sequence straight out of Thunderbirds. You are treated to a picture of the square-jawed hero you are playing the role of, and then you see an exterior view of your ship as it prepares to enter battle.

The weapon selection screen can mean the difference between a successful mission and a complete flop, but only trial and error will help you pick the correct selection for each stage.

Once the action begins, the game is comparable to the likes of Dominator and (Ugh!) DNA Warrior, with the waves of aliens attacking from the right-hand side of the screen, paving the way for a massive end-of-level guardian at the end of each stage.

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X-OUT

From the farthest reaches of outer space, they came to inhabit the depths of our oceans. From their savage assaults on a defenceless human race, grew a planet's last desperate crusade – project Deep Star, the ultimate underwater war machine. Early encounters proved catastrophically ineffective, however a few kept faith, all the time improving Deep Star, the greatest collection of man's technical wizardry, committed to the hands of a lone gladiator for one final attempt at halting the inevitable – the frantic death throes of a civilisation sinking into darkness.

That gladiator's battle cry ... take no prisoners, give no quarter, make no compromise.

Screen shots from Amiga version.

65 Sketty Close, Brackmills Business Park, Northampton NN4 0PL.

● *Strategic underwater action.* ● *Over 50 simultaneous 'on screen' objects.* ● *48 colour graphics.* ● *50 pics per second scrolling.* ● *8 levels each 160 screens.* ● *40 different aliens.* ● *Multi graphics styles incl. lava, fire, crystal.* ● *"Buy and sell" over 25 multi functional extra weapons.* ● *Free style configuring of weapons and satellites.*

SNIPPETS

VIRGIN GET IT (FWEEP!)

Fans of that superb adults comic, Viz, will be pleased to note that Virgin (who else?) are due to release a computer game based on its many characters. The game is being written by Probe, the team behind Outrun and Mr Heli, and is going to be an arcade/adventure. Not a lot is known at present, except that it will centre around Buster Gonads (he of the unfeasibly large testicles), Johnny Fartpants (there's always a commotion in his underwear), and that well-known bully, Biffa Bacon. However, as they make their way around Fulchester, their jolly japes will involve them in several sub-games, where they will meet Sid the Sexist, the Fat Slags, and the fascist Parky. In addition, Roger Melly will oversee the action and be the game's commentator. Expect to see it sometime in the new year.

EXTRA TIME IS HERE - WELL NEARLY!

After months of waiting, it's here! Yes, Anco's enhancement disk is here for Kick Off - unfortunately, though, it arrived too late for this issue. From what we have seen so far, it basically adds features, such as different style pitches and weather conditions to the original game, and it must be said that we had hoped for more - oh well. However, one nice feature we have noticed is the new formations you can choose from - especially the all-out 'Blitz' option! Still, that's only first impressions, and we'll see just how well it fares next month when the AA crew will be reviewing it.

Kick-Off, the game with balls and heaps of enjoyment returns.

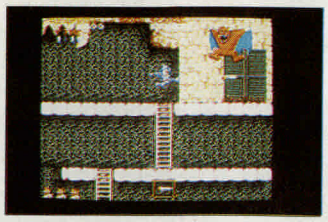
ELITE'S GHOSTS RE-EMERGE

Well, it's been a long time in the making, but it actually looks as if Ghosts'n'Goblins is going to make it to our trusty Amigas! We have already been impressed by Software Creations' conversion of the game's sequel, Ghouls'n'Ghosts, and hopefully Elite's conversion of the first game will come up to scratch. The game has been plagued by disaster ever since it was first announced, but a second group of programmers have been brought in, and the game is starting to fall together. In case you aren't familiar with the scenario, Ghosts'n'Goblins follows the adventures of Arthur the knight who must rescue his girlfriend from the clutches of an evil demon. Along the way, he will be attacked by hordes of the demon's cronies, and must despatch them with one of a number of available weapons. There is still a long way to go with programming, but Elite are confident(ish) that the game will be out in March.

Arriving at roughly the same time, Elite are releasing Grand National, a conversion of an old 64 game they released when they first arrived on the games scene. Not a great deal is known about the game at present, but you are a top jockey who must partake in the biggest racing event of the year - the Grand National of the title. Graphically, the game has been spruced up, and it is believed that there is more depth to the gameplay than that of the lacklustre 8-bit version. Still, we'll have to wait until March to find out.

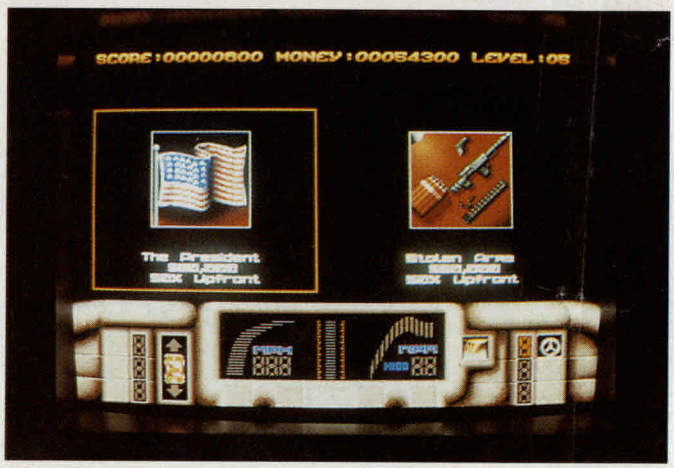
Before both of those, though, Overlander, a race/shoot'em-up game in the style of Roadblasters is set to explode onto our screens in January. Released on the ST over a year ago, Overlander is set in the war-torn future of Earth, where the few survivors need their rations brought to them by the brave Overlanders. The reason behind the underground-dwellers reluctance to emerge is the new breed of Mad Max-style road warriors, and the Overlanders are the only group brave enough to travel on the roads. In addition, a brave Overlander can collate extra money by running dangerous missions for the scared survivors, including the rescue of their leader, and the smashing of destructive drug rings. Arming yourself to the teeth with weapons, such as firebombs, missiles and rockets, you must then tear along the roads, shooting and bumping the enemy off the road until you reach your goal - being careful, though, not to run out of life-preserving shields. The graphics are a great improvement over the ST versions, and there are also better weapons to add to your car. Expect to see the review in a month or two.

Arthur the Knight and Ghosts'n'Goblins are nearly here!

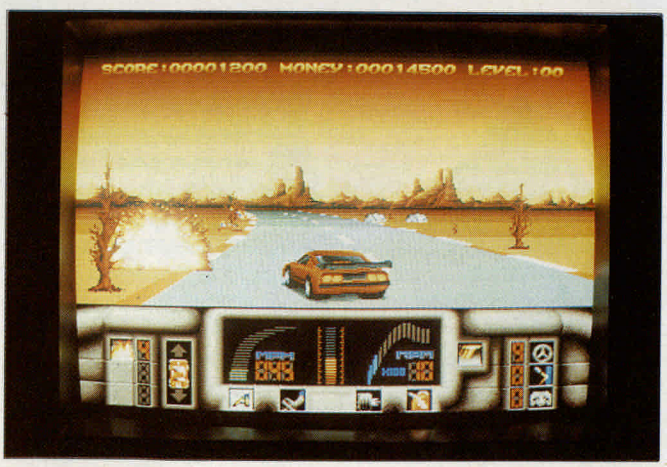


Arthur comes face to face with one of the evil demon's larger cronies.

The race track is nothing but a blur as Elite's Grand National romps home.



The missions in Overlander range from rescuing presidents to smashing drug rings. At the start of each level, one of two missions is offered to you, and you are paid 50% of your fee upfront so that you can buy the weapons.



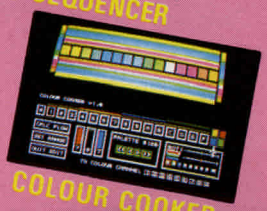
Somewhat wisely, Elite have decided to improve Overlander whilst converting it. The car for instance, looks a lot better than the Volkwagen Beetle from the first game, and now has a Boy Racer spoiler on the back.

Trip-A-Tron

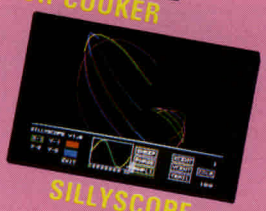
LIGHT SYNTHESISER

CONTROL PANEL

EVENT SEQUENCER



COLOUR COOKER



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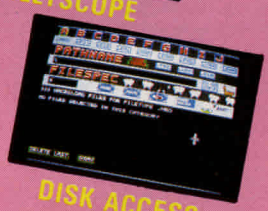

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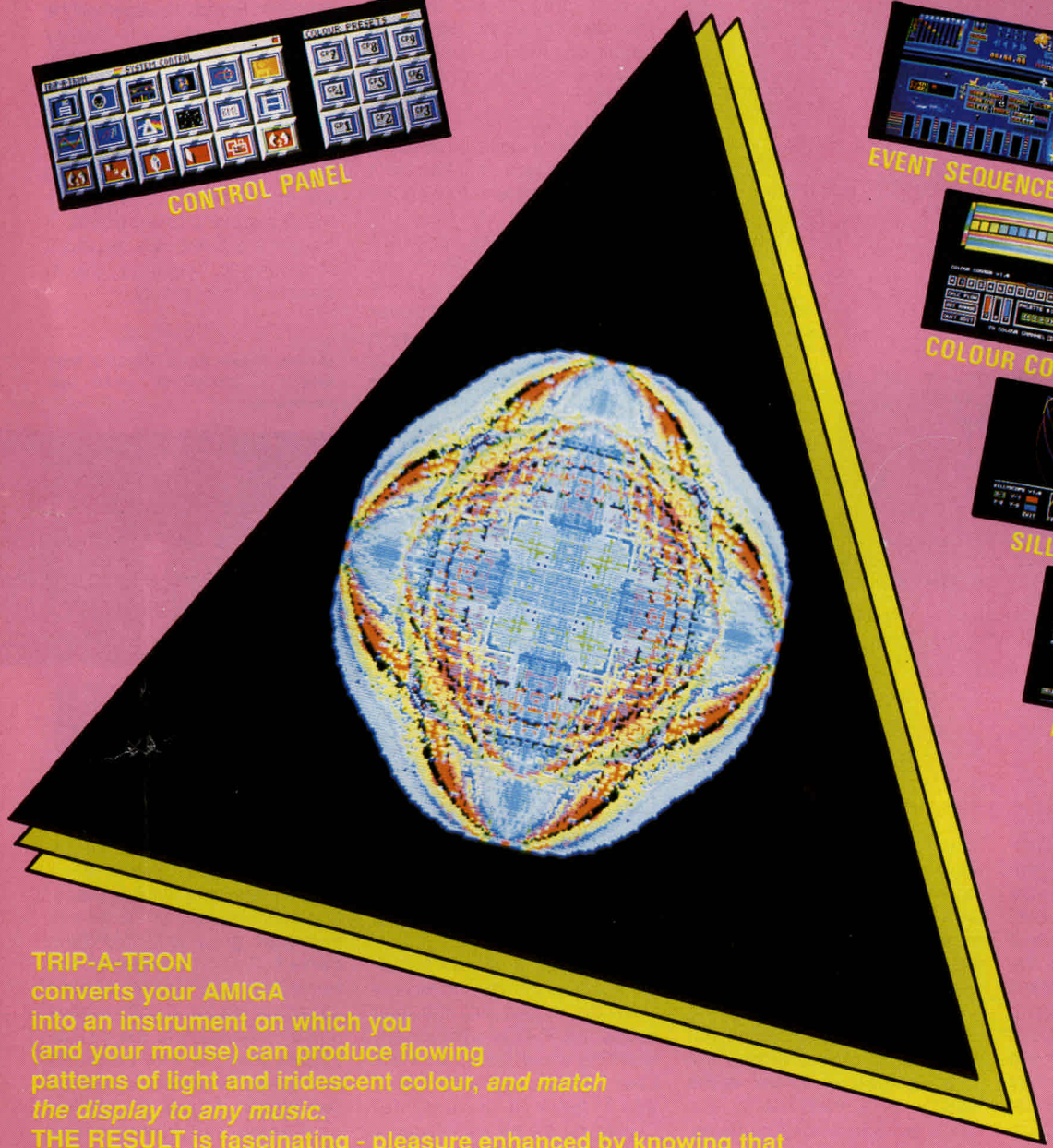

TRIP-A-TRON converts your AMIGA into an instrument on which you (and your mouse) can produce flowing patterns of light and iridescent colour, *and match the display to any music.*

THE RESULT is fascinating - pleasure enhanced by knowing that your sequences can be saved and enjoyed again or *used as performance art at a disco or by a group.*

SOON THE LIGHT-SYNTHESIST COULD BE UP THERE WITH THE GUITAR HEROES.

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TRIP-A-TRON comes with a comprehensive 145 page manual in an attractive A5 ring binder.

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GAINSTAR GO EXPLORING

Having just entered the nightmarish building, our brave rescuer prepares to ascend the stairs where he hopes his friend is being held.

As you explore the forest that surrounds the evil castle, prepare to meet the unknown and fight them to the death.

Coming soon from Gainstar is Dungeon Quest, an adventure which offers 'multisensory gaming' - whatever that is! Set within a dark castle full of knights, dragons and the like, you have entered this foreboding castle in a daring attempt to rescue a friend who has been imprisoned in its bowels. Rumours about the castle are rife, and some locals believe that the building and its inhabitants are so evil, they are draining the goodness and life from the surrounding areas, and are responsible for the death and plague that are striking down the locals. The game is set over several stages before you reach the castle, and the action is depicted in good old 'Dungeon Masterovision', with your adventures viewed in first-person perspective. As can be expected, there is a good selection of nasties to contend with, and our resident dungeoneer, Doug 'Leather and Chains' Johns, has had a bit of a play around with it. You can read his words of wisdom in the review next month.

P-47 TAKES TO THE AIR IN 1990

Due for the new year is P-47 from Firebird. Converted from the arcades, P-47 has you take to the skies in your, believe it not, P-47 and fly straight into battle against the enemy hordes that both out-gun and out-number you. Many planes will be shot down along the way to victory and as some of the unfortunate planes plummet down to the ground below they will leave behind extra weapons that can be collected and attached to the front of your plane. However, due to the size and build of your plane, it will only be able to carry one weapon at a time, and when a second weapon is collected the first will be lost. At regular intervals throughout the game you will come up against one of the enemy's bombers, and here you will need all of your tactical skill to avoid the precise aim of the enemy tail-gunners. So far, the game exists as a scrolling demo, but it is already looking very close to the - admittedly ageing - coin-op that it is converted from. In addition, everything from the original machine seems to have been included, and the end-of-level planes and tanks look particularly good - especially when the screen fills with their deadly flak. P-47 is a horizontally scrolling shoot`em-up and will cost £24.95, and although it won`t make it in time for Christmas, it`ll be something to spend all that Christmas money you get from your Aunts and Uncles on. And, as the old saying goes, check out next month's mag for a review.

Against a stunning backdrop, the lone P-47 avoids the flak spewed from this massive end-of-level plane.

P-47, despite knocking on a bit in the arcades now, was one of the first to feature pick-up icons that enhanced your ship. The thing is, will it seem so impressive now? Tune in next month to find out!

SNIPPETS

NO MORE ELM STREET

Fans of that razor-gloved murderer, Freddy Krueger will be sad to learn that his binary exploits are at present shelved. Not a lot was known about the game, or what form it was going to take, but we were led to believe that it was going to be an arcade/adventure, with you attempting to avoid Freddy in one of his many dreamworlds. If the game still appears, expect it sometime in February. Sweet dreams 'till then, though.

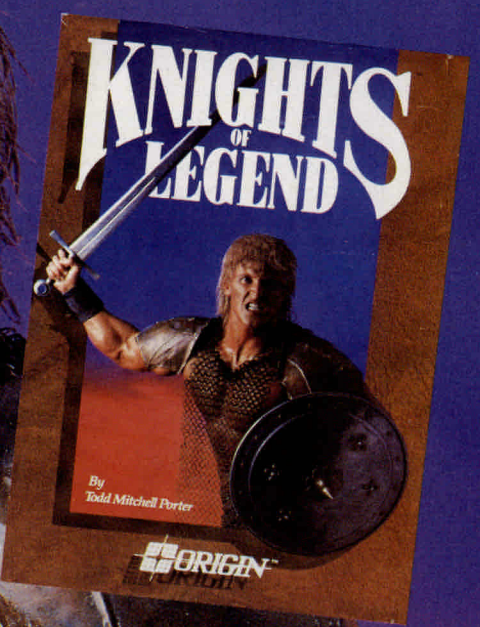
Uh-oh, there goes Earth's last hope - straight into an asteroid!

EAGLE'S RIDER TO THE RESCUE

Oh no! After a war that has lasted 263 years, the whole galaxy has finally been taken over by the unfeeling Cyborgs, and the only place still to be free from their grasp is Mother Earth herself. The only hope for the humans was their skilled squadron leader, Captain Steve Jordan, but much to the dismay of everyone he was captured and taken prisoner during his last mission. All was thought lost until yesterday when a small signal was picked up approaching the Earth`s orbit at incredible speed. Captain Jordan was back, and not only that, he`d brought the Cyborg`s latest high-tech experimental fighter with him; with this, maybe Captain Jordan could find the Cyborg planet and overcome it. Arcade and Adventure are both included in Eagle`s Rider, and many levels will have to be passed through before you come to the Cyborg`s home planet. However, information will have to be collected from a selection of different sources if you are to find the cyborg planet. Eagle`s Rider should be in the shops shortly and will set you back £19.95.

KNIGHTS OF LEGEND™

It has taken more than eight calendar years to create **Knights of Legend**, the crowning achievement in medieval fantasy and role playing. We've developed the most comprehensive combat system ever, surrounded by a meticulously crafted world of strategy, action and emotion. The lands are filled with hundreds of unique personalities and dozens of towns and hamlets - and the people are filled with spirit, conflict and honour.



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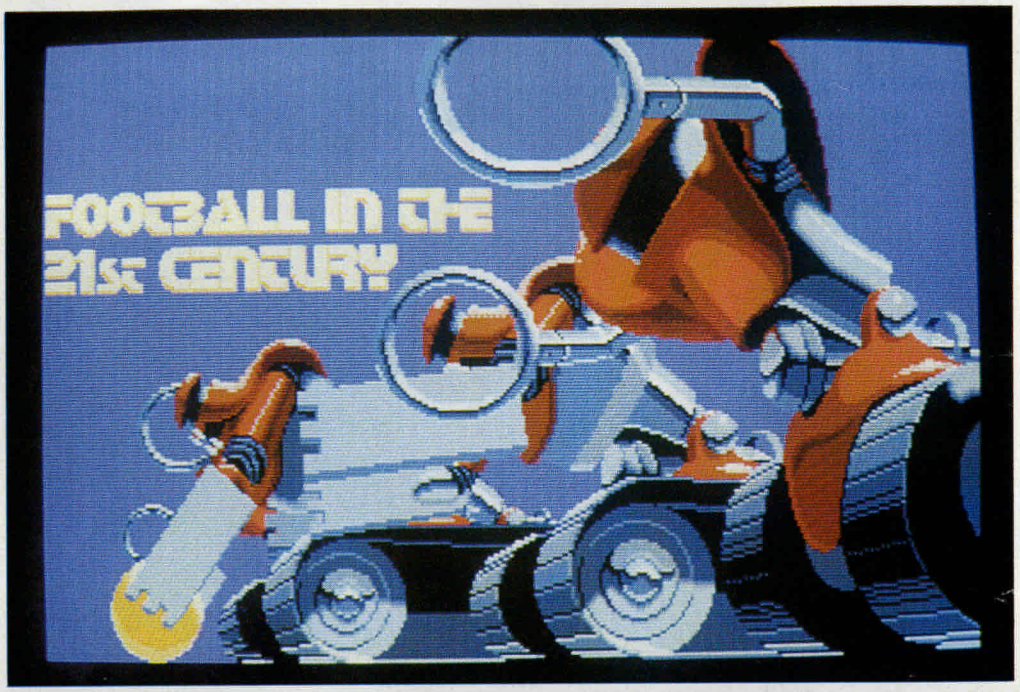
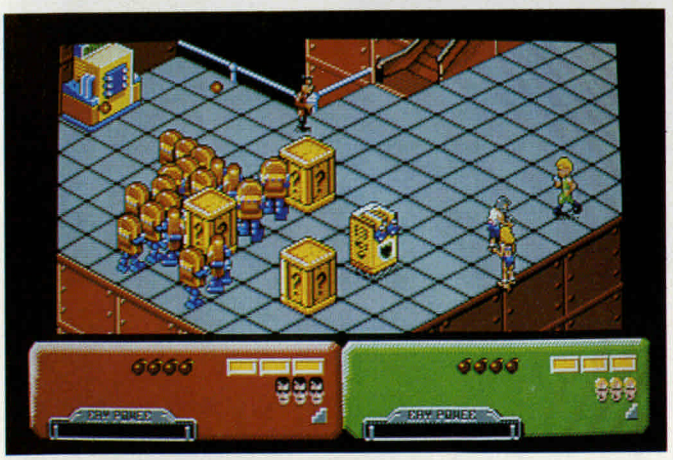
INTO THE FUTURE WITH CYBERBALL

Teque are in the progress of converting Domark`s latest title, Cyberball, to the Amiga, and with such titles as Pacmania and Thunderbirds behind them, Teque have made quite a name for themselves in the software market. The year is 2022, and Cyberball is the popular sport that everybody watches. Very similar to American football, you control two teams which must score goals by running to the opposition's end of the field with the ball in their possession; the major difference is that the players are no longer human (due to the fact that all the human competitors are dead), but robots five times the size of humans, and only these robots can now withstand the violence and destruction that is produced during the game. Two players can play simultaneously, or one player against the computer. Like American football, you can use tactical manoeuvres, and there are up to one hundred differnt offensive and defensive plays available. Various models of robots can be used: the quarterback droid that is in the shape of a human for manoeuvrebility, and the running back droid that is mounted on a set of tracks giving him that extra speed over the quarter back droid and making him better for scoring goals. In addition, these robots are very expensive, so any damaged must be repaired at half-time - which can prove costly. Cyberball will be making its appearance just after Christmas, and should cost 24.95



During 'time-out', the robotic warriors can be either enhanced or rebuilt, depending on their needs. This period also allows you to rethink your strategy.

Domark's sport of the future is nearing completion and looking good. Let's just hope that the Amiga version features the crunching sounds of metal against metal during play.



Also coming from Domark, here are some early shots of the Amiga version of Escape From The Planet of The Robot Monsters,a one or two-player game set in a neat-looking isometric play area.

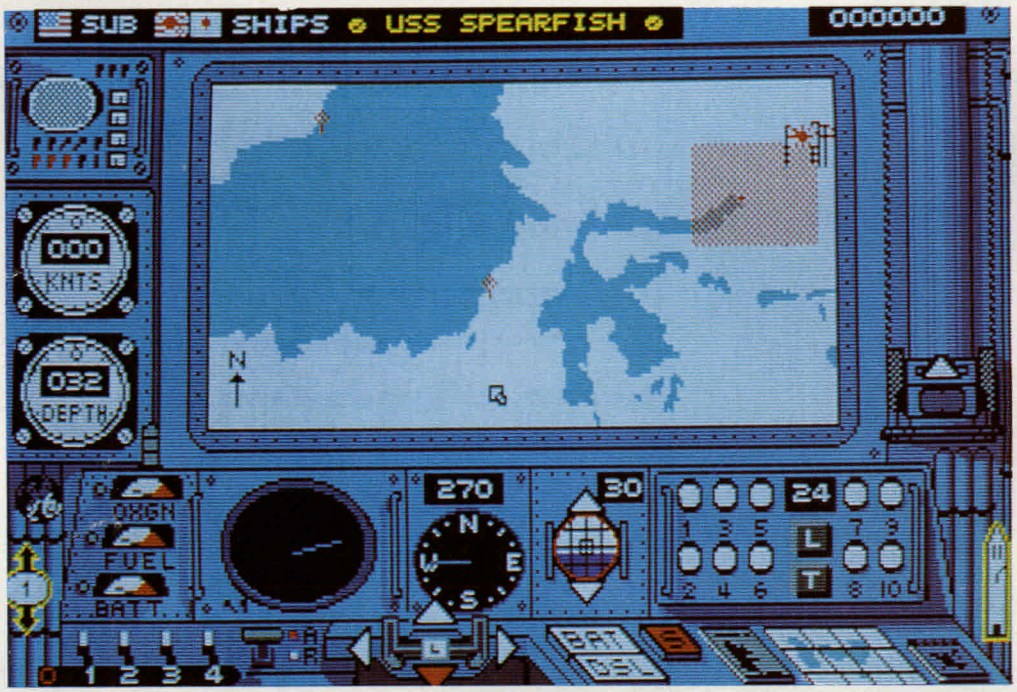
Working together, the two players blast their way through the milling hordes of robots as they attempt to rescue the beautiful Sarah Bellum.

MORE FROM MASTERTRONIC

Following hot on the heels of their previous 16-Blitz games, is the latest on the ultra low-price label: Hunter Killer. Written in the States by Solarco, Hunter Killer is a war game in the style of such games as Silent Service and Grandslam's Hunt for the Red October. The game is set during the second World War, and you are one of the few surviving submarines after the Pearl Harbour massacre. Your mission is to choose one of eleven submarines, and then take it safely through the many missions on offer. All in all, there are fourteen missions, and these will see you using every tactic in the book to swing the war in your favour. For five quid, this sounds like ridiculously good value, but you can find out for yourself when it is released in January.

Also due out for a fiver, is another game from that man who seems to produce games like they are going out of fashion - Mike Singleton. Grimblood is billed as a 'Gothic whodunnit', in which you must find the murderer who is hiding somewhere in castle Grimblood. Grimblood will be using digitised sound and graphics to send a shiver down our spines, but, once again, you'll have to wait a while before you see it.

One final note: adventure fans will be pleased to know that Virgin have signed a deal with Magnetic Scrolls, and will be releasing several adventures over the next few months. Details are scarce, but Mitch and the crew are waiting with bated (bad) breath.



Dive! Dive! Dive! Below the five pound bracket with Hunter Killer from 16-Blitz.

PALACE HAVE YOU HOLDING YOUR BREATH

And from the look of their latest game, Dragon's Breath, it could be worth it. With Fantasy role playing becoming all the rage, and software houses seem to have noticed the change in the market. RPG comes in many different forms, but without a doubt the most popular category of game has to be the AD&D type, having your characters battle to the death with various evil incarnations. But unlike before, your main objective is not to kill the dragons, but find and lead them. Communicating with passing travellers for information will be the initial step towards the building of your non-human army, and purchasing various components for your spells will also be necessary. Once you have located a large selection of dragon eggs, you can then go on to capture and govern the lands that surround you, and eventually find all the pieces of the magical talisman that, when complete, will take them to Dwarf Mountain. Dragon's Breath can be be played with up to two other players, being human or computer-controlled. As Palace say, this isn't a game to played in five minutes, and if you play the game correctly, one game could last indefinitely. You should expect to see Dragon's Breath early next year, and priced at £24.95.

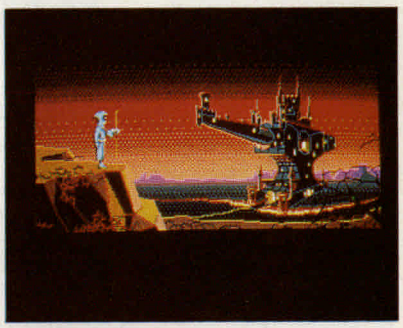
Following up a game like Future Wars (which did rather well for itself at a French awards do a few weeks back) is far from easy, but it looks like Palace have cracked it.

SNIPPETS

THAT'S ANOTHER FINE MESS YOU'VE GOTTEN ME INTO

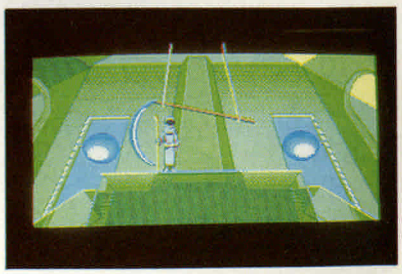
Coming soon from CRL, is Laurel & Hardy's 100th Birthday Celebration game. So far, the twosome have already appeared in a lacklustre game on the 64 which involved throwing custard pies, but CRL are promising that this one will be a lot better - let's hope so. Details are sketchy at the moment, but expect to see a mono arcade/adventure with sub-games sometime in the new year. In addition, CRL have also announced the imminent release of The Sorceror's Apprentice. Not a lot is known about this, but we don't think it is based on the version Mickey Mouse starred in during the cartoon Fantasia. Still, expect zombies and spells sometime in the new year.

Devised by Brian Moriaty, on of the ex-Infocom crew, Loom looks set to knock the adventure scene for six.



WOOL FROM US GOLD'S LOOM

Just a quickie to announce U.S. Gold's newie from Lucasfilm, Loom. I haven't got a lot of info on it yet, as it's still very early days, but it looks set to be an arcade/adventure in the mould of the Sierra games. More next month.



VIRGIN's SANTA

Don't miss out on an extra special stocking this Christmas when Santa will be awarding the lucky winners with:

5 FIRST PRIZES OF

£1,000 worth of software of your choice, or an Amiga or ST plus £500 worth of software of your choice

10 SECOND PRIZES OF

£500 worth of software of your choice

20 THIRD PRIZES OF

£250 worth of software of your choice

1000 RUNNER UP PRIZES TOO!

Any one of the six Virgin Games arcade classics mentioned earlier.

MAKE SURE SANTA VISITS YOU TWICE THIS YEAR!

HERE WE GO! ....

Virgin Games have decided to become a Santa and hand out £30,000 worth of fabulous goodies. All you have to do to gain from Santa's generosity is to buy any three of these games:

SHINOBI
DOUBLE DRAGON II
GEMINI WING
CONTINENTAL CIRCUS
SILKWORM
NINJA WARRIORS

Simply collect three tokens - you'll find one in each game - and send them to Virgin Games. The prize draw will take place on 29th January 1990.

WIN £30,000 WORTH OF PRIZES

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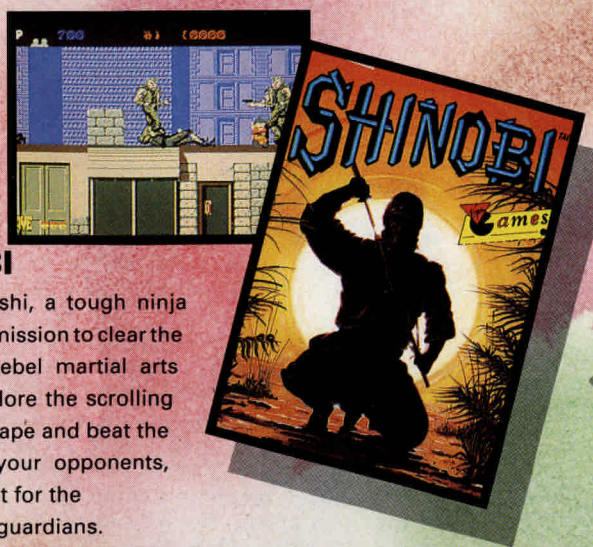


SHINOBI

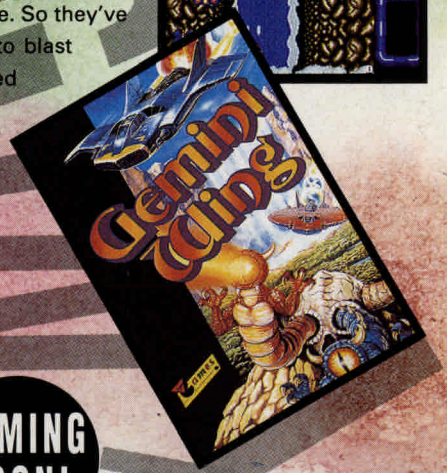
You're masashi, a tough ninja warrior on a mission to clear the town from rebel martial arts fanatics. Explore the scrolling urban landscape and beat the hell out of your opponents, but watch out for the end-of-level guardians.

SILKWORM

It's not true! Even after months of negotiation with the Ruskies and despite a mass exodus out of Afghanistan, we're still under threat. There's no one left to press the Nuke button so the battle has switched to copters and plane. Non-stop shoot-'em-up arcade action.

CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

Compete in formula one races in Brazil, America, France, Monaco, Germany, Spain and Japan. Race hard, but watch out for other cars. Colliding can be fatal. And do visit the pits for fuel and repairs.



GEMINI WING

The aliens have had enough. They're not going to take their brethren being blasted on computer screen any more. So they've come down in their hordes to blast the pitiful race of carbon-based life forms called humans. Can you stop them? Somebody has to do it.

COMING SOON!

NINJA WARRIORS

Can you survive brutal enemy onslaught? Fight with hand, foot and dagger to rid the street of the scum that dare infest your home town. A classic arcade conversion.

COMING SOON!

DOUBLE DRAGON II

Ferocious two-player simultaneous martial arts mayhem. Evil fiends have captured your girlfriend - it's up to you and your brother to rescue her. Don't fail. Through the town, countryside, mountains and finally into the lair. Use whatever weapons you can find to stay alive.

ALL AVAILABLE ON	
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Virgin Games

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Just Say No...

About two months ago, I was looking for a brilliant Amiga mag with the specifications of AA. I glanced along the shelves and saw a good-quality, colourful mag entitled Amiga Action. I flicked through the pages, amazed at the quality - needless to say, I bought it. Your mag is brilliant! On to my main point, though. I have bought both issues of your mag, and I agree with your views on piracy. I have been an A500 owner for two-and-a-half months, and have been offered a lot of pirated software which has been 'cracked and trained'. Everytime, I have refused, as I feel very strongly about hacking groups ruining the software industry, and every one of the seventeen games I own is original. It isn't a huge collection, but I'd rather have a few original games than have pirate copies which will cause the breakdown of the software industry.

While I am here, I also have a few suggestions:

1. How about an award for the 'mega games'. For instance, a gold medal or a hit, etc.?

2. Have a 'letter of the month' award, resulting in a prize for the writer (hint, hint!).

3. How about printing more official cheats, rather than maps?

4. More news and previews of things to come.

5. Also, more competitions. The ones you have had have been superb.

I would also like to complain about software houses that advertise games that aren't even released. For instance, I paid out £16.95 for WEC Le Mans two months ago, only to find from Ocean that they weren't going to release it for a very long time. I also saw an advert advertising Chase H.Q. and Operation Thunderbolt already. When is WEC Le Mans being released on the Amiga?

Seamus Slater, Shoeburyness.

AA: Well done on your stand against piracy, all the time there are people like yourself refusing pirated games, the industry will continue to produce decent games. As for your points on improving the mag, here are the answers in order:

1. We already have one. Any game that scores over, 80% is AA rated, a fact that is indicated by a large plaque with our logo on.

2. We're working on it.

3. What we aim to do with GTGA is have a happy medium between the two. This way, we can offer the best of both worlds.

4. Providing there's stuff to report on, we'll keep on expanding the relevant sections.

5. No problem.

We have had a lot of letters complaining about mail order companies offering stuff that isn't out, and the only thing I can say is don't order it unless we've reviewed it. This isn't a fail-safe method, but it means you won't have to wait half as long! As for WEC Le Mans, the game's release date is listed as 'indefinite', meaning we'll probably never see it!

The Amiga Action Q & A Service.

For at least a year, I have been trying to find the right magazine. For example, Amiga User, ACE, The One, CU, Amiga Computing, Your Amiga... but I was never quite satisfied until Amiga Action. It was the cover that caught my eye, but I was particularly impressed by the fabulous pictures and the useful percentages you give for each game.

Now for my questions:

1. I know that Populous is a very good game, what percentage you would give it.

2. I've heard some rumours saying that you can use the Sega joypad with the Amiga instead of a joystick - is this true? If so, is it the controller from the 8 or 16-bit Sega?

3. Which joystick do you recommend?

4. Is Shadow of the Beast worth £35?

John Van Steenberghe, Barnes.

AA:1. Errr, after conferring with the guys in the office, we think that, had Amiga Action been out when Populous was released, it would have scored roughly 90%.

2. I know that normal joysticks can be used on the Sega system, but I'm not sure whether the pads can be used on the Amiga. If it's true, it'll only be the 8-bit console's pads, as the 16-bit Megadrive isn't being launched until next Easter.

3. It depends on your preferences and your favourite style of game. I like things like Rainbow Islands, Kick Off and Giana Sisters, and use a Zipstik or a clear Comp Pro because they are so responsive. Whitey likes Battlehawks and Hostages, and uses a Konix Speedking. Finally, Doug uses a Comp Pro.

4. It depends. Although a brilliant game to look at and listen to, Beast's gameplay can be a tad repetitive. Take a look for yourself to see if you want to pay an extra tenner for the superb graphics and a bundled T-shirt.

Praise Be!

Well hello, you chaps down there at Amiga Action; I was thinking it was about time we Amiga owners had a magazine all of our own. And what a super brill job you have done as well - creep, creep. I'll have a monitor if you're thinking of dishing out a pressie my way (only joking). Seriously, though, I'm going to swear now. I have read all of the Amiga mags in circulation that have anything to do with the Amiga, and yours is by far the best for several reasons.

1. When other mags show screenshots of games, they all too often tend to be out of focus; therefore, you get the wrong impression of a game. I for one, will not buy a game if I am led to believe that the graphics are iffy. Your screenshots are so clear, it is like I am actually playing the game.

2. Having three separate reviewers is a great idea. It gives an all-round feeling of what you would be getting for your money. It also avoids any biased feelings towards a game - let's face it, we all have our preferences. I play games depending on my mood, and if I am upset about something, I will play a game where I can blow up everything on the screen. If I am in a thoughtful mood, though, I will play a game that requires a little thought. Your reviews are done in a comical manner, which I find quite amusing.

3. If, by some slim chance, this letter gets printed you'll probably be inundated with letters disagreeing with my next statement: don't bother with a cover disk. There are loads of mags on the market with disks on the front, so buy these if you must have a disk, but yours is at an affordable price without one. After all, your mag is only £1.95, whereas the disk-mounted mags are all £2.95. You do a good job without a disk - keep it that way.

4. Your GTGA section is more than anyone can ask for. I have read quite a few tips for Blood Money, but yours was so much easier to understand. Did you have a cheat for it? If so, what is it!

Right, I'm off, maybe I'll write again, but who knows! Bye.

Xris A. Maynard (Nutty ninja), New Milton.

AA: Thanks for your complimentary words. It's funny, but, as most of the letters to AA are complimentary, our proof reader reckons we make them up. So, if you have a major gripe

about AA, drop us a line and make his day. If not, just write in anyway! By the way: No, we didn't have a cheat version of Blood money, and the blisters on our hands are proof of that!

The Blackpool Illuminations of the Magazine World?

Firstly, I must congratulate you on the amazing success of your absolutely brill mag. I haven't been fortunate enough to get an Amiga yet, so I wandered into my newsagent's to pick up some info on the computer itself, and expected to pay £4 for a black and white book. Instead, I saw the Blackpool lights of all the computer mags. It was so good, I sneaked out and bought the sequel, which is most unlike me, as I am saving hard for my Amiga. So, please print ten good reasons why the Amiga is worth buying to stop the 'oldies' nagging.

As I am new to the world of Amiga games, please could you tell me

your personal top ten favourite Amiga games (I love soccer games and RPGs, personally), and start giving away a cover disk. Also, how about a section for rude computer-related jokes, and a mark for a game's playability.

Kevin Carr, No Address Given.

AA: First of all, ten good reasons for getting an Amiga:

1. It's the best games computer around.
2. It means you won't have to sneak out and buy Amiga Action, only to look whistfully at the games in it - instead, you can make your choice for the next one to buy.
3. You'll be able to laugh at your 8-bit-owning friends.
4. You can learn to become a binary artist with its superb graphical capabilities.
5. Or a Beethoven, with its superb sound capabilities.
6. For a soccer fan like yourself, it offers the best footy game around - Anco's Kick Off.
7. It has the best RPGs on any computer.
8. Software houses are now producing software that will wipe the floor with the stuff on other computers.
9. Because it will give your Dad something to do when Coronation Street is on!
10. Because it's excellent value for money.

Right, now Amiga Action's reviewers' fave games:

DOUG: Dungeon Master, Blood Money, Switchblade, Rainbow Islands, Bard's Tale, Faery Tale Adventure, any Sierra game, Palladin, Times of Lore, and Phantasie III.

STEVE: Beach Volley, Rainbow Islands, Kick Off, New Zealand Story, Great Giana Sisters, Xenon II, Powerdrift, Bubble Bobble, Rick Dangerous, and Rocket Ranger.

WHITEY: Battlehawks 1942, Interphase, IK+, Kult, Xenon II, Indy Adventure, Test Drive II, F16, Bionic Commando, and R-Type.

Release Dates

Can you please tell me if the following games will ever be launched on the Amiga: Guerilla Wars, Twin Cobra, Final Lap, Black Tiger, Typhoon?

Simone Warra, Croydon.

AA: Guerilla Wars is postponed 'indefinitely., No news at all on Twin Cobra and Final Lap. Black Tiger has been held back until February, and Typhoon won't be appearing, I'm afraid.

More on Piracy

In AA2, I read the article about piracy and felt mad that it was spreading over the UK. I am writing to ask whether there is anything us non-pirates can do about it? I feel sorry for the software houses and the honest people who go out and find that the price of a computer game has gone up because of these people. I haven't got an Amiga yet, but I'll read AA before choosing any games.

Thomas Brooks, Glasgow.

AA: The easiest thing to do is stick by your guns, and don't accept copies. Simple, eh!

Where's the High-Scores?

I am writing to congratulate you on such a great mag, it has everything, especially colour and accurate reviews. I get loads of other mags, and I would like to say that yours beats them all hands down! The only thing missing is a high-score chart.

Grant Maclean, Glasgow.

AA: A high-score chart is still a possibility, but past experiences show that people tend to tell porkies, and that defeats the whole object! Still, we'll bear it in mind.

A Few Things...

So far, I must say that I am in full agreement with your policy towards reviews and the structure of Amiga Action. I recommend that the standard of humour stays as it is and doesn't descend to the level of other review mags now. As for the programmer interviews - wonderful! Just what I want to see. I am sure that such articles give the programmer a chance to speak back, along with an idea of their influences when programming (it can't all be alchohol!).

Now for my recommendations for improvements. The graphics features were good, and I hope that the sound column will be in a similar vein. In the past, all the many promising features have ended up discussing the relevant merits of MIDI and synths, which, although being well done, I'm sure the average games player doesn't have several hundred pounds to waste on them.

Secondly, the PD demo section is all very good, bit of no use if catalogue numbers aren't shown. Finally, please switch to glue binding, as used in other mags, I don't like staples as they always fall out.

David Fairweather, Cleveland.

AA: Thanks for your suggestions, we will start including catalogue numbers for the PD section - honest! As for the music column, we promise you it won't be entirely MIDi and synth-based - if ever!

Where do we get Back Issues?

After reading issue two of Amiga Action, I have only encountered one problem: getting hold of issue one. Please can you advise me and other people how we can get it?

Simon Hayhoe, Norwich.

AA: No problem! Just drop a line to Amiga Action Back Issues at the address below. But be quick, they are going fast!

Right, that's yer lot for this month, but if you are feeling aggrieved about anything in the software industry, from piracy to the price of games, or from whether Doug ineeds plastic surgery or not, or even something trivial like the state of games being released today, just drop me a line. We can't reply personally, but as from next month the writer of the best letter - whether it is funny, topical or whatever, will receive a game of their choice. So, what are youwaiting for? Get yer pens out, and send them to:

Amiga Action Letters Desk,
Gollner Publishing,
Latham House,
Quarry Lane.
Chichester,
West Sussex
PO19 2NY.

As we enter a new decade, Electronic Arts want to celebrate in style the success of such titles as Populous, Fusion, and Battle Chess, and their forthcoming games for the '90's, and are offering a superb Sony large screen TV / Monitor unit. In addition, EA are giving away THIRTY runners-up prizes of a game of your choice. Bear in mind, though, that it must be a game - and these include Bullfrog's Populous and Fusion, Interplay's Battlechess, as well as any of the Bard's Tale games or Keef the Thief.

When you have answered the questions, cut along the dotted line, pop it in an envelope, and send to:

Electronic Arts Compo,
Amiga Action.
Gollner Publishing,
Latham House,
Chichester,
West Sussex.
PO19 2NY.

THE QUESTIONS

1. Who is the team behind EA's smash hit game Populous?

2. Who wrote the innovative Battlechess for EA?

3. Nowadays, a well-known computer game musician works solely for EA - who is he?

Amiga Action Competition Rules

The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding competitions or the results of competitions. All prizes are offered believing them to be available. If, however, a prize is unavailable we reserve the right to substitute a prize of comparable value. No cash alternatives will be given. Results will be published as soon as possible and prizes despatched as quickly as possible. Please refrain from phoning regarding competition results or prize delivery. Employees of Gollner Publishing Ltd and companies participating in competitions are not eligible to enter.

The answers to the Electronic Arts competition are:

Answer 1 .....

Answer 2 .....

Answer 3 .....

Name.....

Address .....

.....

.....

Post code .....

Daytime telephone number .....

Which game would you like to win? .....

CYBERBALL™

October 2006 Paul "Bubba" Kwinn banned for bionic violation

September 2008 Random bionic testing enforced

October 2008 Bionically repaired players take legal action

November 2015 League office disbanded, first completely cybernetic player fielded. Model ST32 gains 382 yards rushing in its first game, but loses an arm in the process.

January 2022 The last human to play the game, Dave "Rocket" Ralston decapitated by a face-masking violation

Atari ST Screenshots

Programmed by: Quixel

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TENGEN

The Name in Coin-Op Conversions.

DOMARK

Published by DOMARK LTD, Ferry House, 51-57 Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR Tel: 01-780 2224

Available on: IBM PC, Atari ST, Amiga, Commodore 64 Cassette & Disk, Amstrad Cassette & Disk, Spectrum + 3, Spectrum 48/128

MUSICALLY SPEAKING

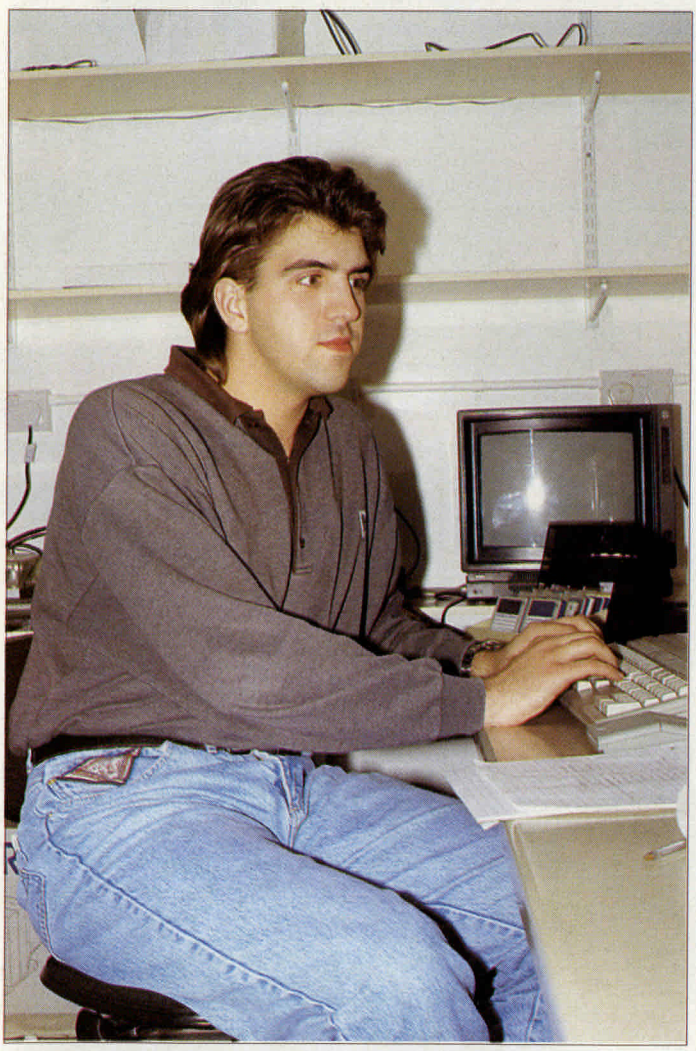
"Continuing our look at the Amiga's music capabilities, our man with the headphones, Kevin Coverdale, treks up to Ocean and finds out from Jonathan Dunn, composer extraordinaire, just how he puts together the tunes behind our favourite games."

Have you ever thought to yourself, "How the heck do they produce music like that for a game" while your foot is tapping to the hard core sound on the latest Amiga game? You have? Then at last Amiga Action can reveal all. We had a chat to Jonathan Dunn, one of the top men on the computer music front, and the man responsible for the mega tunes you get on most of Ocean`s big game smashes.

Starting Off

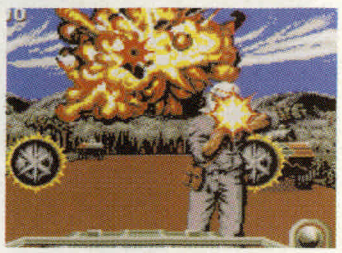
Right! Starting at the beginning, Jonathan doesn't go off and start composing the music for a game straight away; this is left until the very late stages of its development, after which he sits down with the programmers to get ideas from them (as well as giving them ideas himself) regarding the music`s style, the type of music they want and how much memory he can use for his musical masterpiece.

If it is an arcade conversion he is involved with, however, life might be a lot easier due to the fact that the arcade company might supply him with the song sheet for the coin-op so that he can copy the music straight into the computer and not have to do the whole thing from guesswork. On some of the machines (if he`s lucky) the manufacturers may even build in a "test mode" which is located within the depth`s of the coin-op. What this actually allows Jonathan to do is take samples of the game`s sound effects, and possibly the individual instruments used in the arcade game`s music, so that he can port these straight into the computer rather than having to use guesswork once again as to what sound effects and instruments the arcade game uses. From this stage of the game`s musical development he then sits down in his little soundproof cupboard and goes about developing the music for the game.



Jonathan is a mere fledgling in the computer music world. At only twenty-one years old, he first joined Ocean two years ago hoping to do some freelance work, but found that he was working full time for them straight away. The rest, as they say, is history, and since then, he has provided music for most of Ocean's releases.

When composing the music for Operation Thunderbolt, Jonathan had to improvise the tune from a five-second jingle from the coin-op. This can prove risky, as purists may then say that it isn't a close conversion, whilst other people will probably claim that the sound isn't all it could have been - it must be hard trying to please all of the people all of the time!



From Scratch

If he is working on an original title, it is a case of working from scratch on what he and the programmers had discussed at

WHAT YOU NEED

1) A brain (the bigger the better).

2) An Amiga (either a 512K or 1 Meg).

3) A TV or monitor (to see what you're doing).

4) A music package (i.e. Music X, Aegis Sonix, sound tracker, to name but a few).

5) A good knowledge of machine code (either 68000, Z80 and possibly, 6502).

6) A good assembler (Hisoft`s is a good one to look at).

7) Money to buy the stuff with!

8) Lots of the amber nectar.

Possible add-ons for later on:

9) A keyboard (with Midi ports on it).

10) A Midi interface with connecting cable (for the keyboard to connect to the Amiga).

11) A sampler (anything which is compatible with the package you're using will do).

12) More money to buy this stuff with.

Jonathan's first piece of music was for the Amiga was for Ocean's big tie-in, Batman. Each level has a separate tune, and somehow Jonathan managed to retain a lot of the film's dark and brooding atmosphere - especially in the Batmobile section, which features a nice pounding beat - music to drive by!

their meeting regarding the musical content for the game. It`s a different matter altogether concerning a coin-op conversion, though. If Jonathan is given the job of "porting" the music over to the Amiga (or any other machine for that matter) he no doubt uses the music from the song sheet supplied by the arcade company along with the samples taken from the arcade game, and places them all into Pro 24 via an Atari ST so he can start to reproduce the original soundtrack. If, however, the music doesn't sound quite right once it has been entered into Pro 24 it will then be a case of editing the track by taking away or adding notes, channels, or whatever Jonathan thinks the small screen version of the game should sound like, without making the track sound dull or boring.

A good example of this sort of thing in action can be found on Operation Thunderbolt. Jonathan explained that, because there was no original tune in the coin-op itself, he managed to find a short jingle within the machine`s sound effects which he thought would make a good tune. With a quick sample of the jingle into his Ensoniq E.P.S. performance sampler, it was then put into Pro 24 and, after a lot of keyboard bashing, this little jingle became a full-blown tune which you should be able to hear on the Amiga version of the game.

Now that Jonathan has the music for the new game firmly in Pro 24 and he`s happy with the results of the finished piece, he then prints out a hard copy of the musical score, takes the notes from the print-out and converts them into machine code (through an assembler) so that the Amiga can understand exactly what note is played where and when (I told you it would be hard). From here it can then be squeezed, placed and fitted into the relevant space which the programmers have assigned for Jonathan`s latest masterpiece.

Essential Equipment

So what does the man with the magic fingers use to get the Amiga to blast out the mega tunes he composes? Well, for starters Jonathan`s set-up consists of Pro 24 running on an Atari ST which is linked via MIDI to a keyboard, a Korg M1 Workstation and, not forgetting, a Ensoniq E.P.S. performance sampler.

So there you have it, a full description of how Jonathan puts together his masterpiece so that it can be used in the latest "Mega" game. Still think you're good enough to be a games musician and want to give it a try?

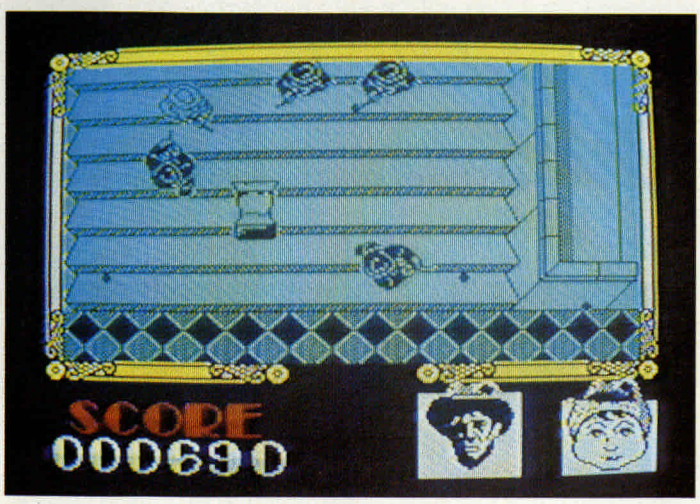
Advice For Beginners

A few things worth remembering if you do decide to hit the big time with computer music: don't rush into it!! These things take time and a lot of good luck, so be patient and keep at it; write stuff YOU want to write, not stuff that sounds similar to something you`ve heard on the radio or on the telly (it may sound good on the dance floor of a disco, but on a computer it`ll most probably sound crap!).

ANY QUESTIONS?

If you`ve got any problems to do with music on the Amiga then drop me a line c/o Amiga Action and I`ll try and help out.

It's come to my attention that our dear beloved Ed wants a mug shot of me to be plastered all over Amiga Action's music section for the next issue. So rather than me deciding whether to shock you or not as regards a mug shot, send a letter explaining to the Ed why you think it's a good idea to have a photo of me in the mag.



Before he started working on the Amiga, Johnathan produced tunes for most of Ocean's 8-bit games, and has provided the music for games, such as New Zealand Story, Renegade III, Matchday II, Platoon, and, more recently, Ocean's small-screen conversion of the Untouchables. However, it must be said that he enjoys the freedom and lack of memory restrictions when writing on the Amiga!

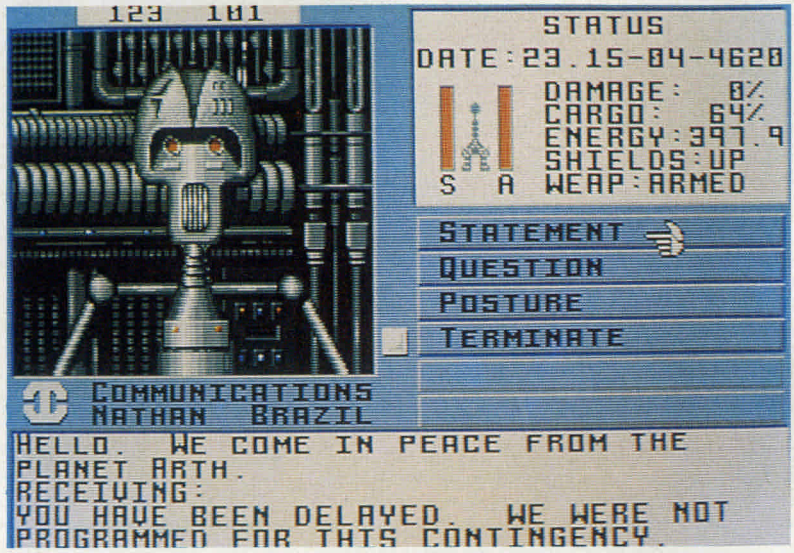
Boggits Domain

Do you know, I'm beginning to quite like this place. Adventureland isn't all dark caves and windy crags - this part of the forest can be quite peaceful. Winter never seems to penetrate this far into the wood, so I've got the long evenings kicking through the piles of leaves around my old tree all to myself. Of course, there is one unwelcome visitor who always seems to find his way to my front door - the Goblin Postman! Luckily, as well as the normal sack of squeals from humans, I have been receiving news of some interesting games which are coming this way.

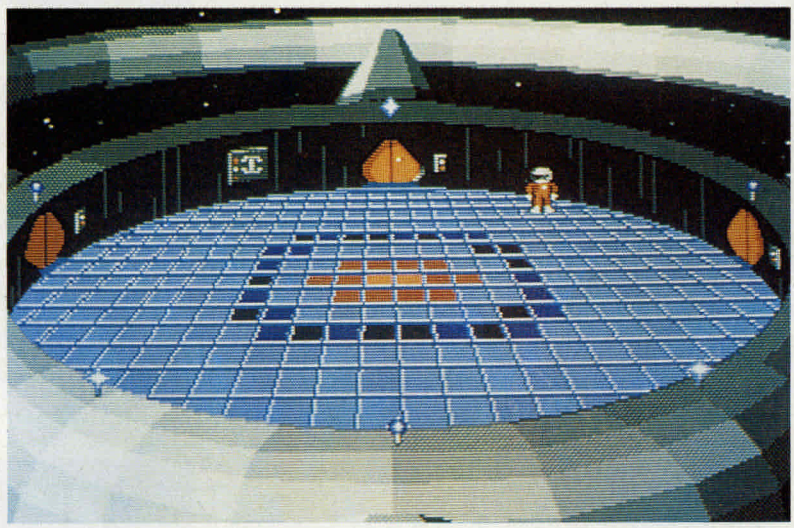
Electronic Arts have announced the release of STARFLIGHT - a new fantasy role-playing game. You will be responsible for a 6-man space crew on a mission to explore a galaxy of 270 star systems. The ship is equipped with missiles and shields, but your task is to communicate with alien races and find new sites for colonization. The screen-shots look nice; I look forward to the game.

As I promised last month, SPACE QUEST III has finally arrived for Amiga players. It's an expensive game, but it is lots of fun. I can specially recommend it as a game for adventure newcomers as it's not very difficult. And as we all know only too well, the BOGGIT knows the answers should you get stuck!

Fans of that luckless nerd, Leisure Suit Larry, will be overjoyed to hear that he has finally arrived - still looking for love in all the wrong places! I recently had the privilege of spending an hour with Al Lowe, the creator of Larry, and I'm pleased to say that he was as nice a guy as you could meet. On your behalf, I did complain that the game wasn't 'dirty' enough, but then I know you better than Al does! Larry II is much tougher than its predecessor and it has a different feel to it. I'll be interested to know what you think of it.



EA's Starflight. 'Beam us up Scotty!', for a futuristic space romp



I should like to point out that in addition to being an irascible and evil-tempered sonofabitch, I am also mean. There! - that surprised you, didn't it? For this reason I get apoplectic when I find that there are still rubbish games being foisted upon gullible humans at outrageous prices. So guard your gold-pouch carefully and don't part with a groat until you hear from me. I don't want to hear any human whining that he bought a turkey on my recommendation.

Those 'clever clogs' amongst you who have already solved the mysteries of the BLOODWYCH dungeons will be interested to know that an additional data disk is now available from Mirrorsoft. Providing you have kept a SAVE game file from your first encounter, you will be able to continue the good fight with this handy add-on.

The new disk contains a host of new spells and monsters, and there are now options to allow monsters to join your band. Fancy a Giant Crab as your bodyguard?

Magnetic Scrolls Strikes Back

It would appear that news of the death of the Magnetic Scrolls Adventure Team is somewhat

premature. A shining knight in the unlikely form of Richard Branson has arrived to get them out of their pickle, and into his. (Yes, I know it's the wrong Branston - but it sounded smart when I first thought of it!). The Scrolls team have been responsible for some great games in their time and I know they have a big hush-hush game under wraps at the moment.

I wish them well with the Virgin Mastertronic Company, as they certainly deserve it, but it seems a strange choice to make. If I was given the task of writing down the names of all the good games from Virgin, I think I'd have trouble covering the back of a second-class stamp.

Chaos Strikes Back - Slowly

More, 'Good news - Bad News' from Mirrorsoft for Dungeon Master fans. The sequel game 'CHAOS STRIKES BACK' is at last complete and will be released at Christmas - that's the good news. The bad news is that only the Atari ST version has been written, and the company does not intend to produce an Amiga version until they first produce a version of the original Dungeon Master for the IBM PC. This means we have a long wait. Aaaarrgh!! Pass me another ST user, I think I've burst this one...

It's no good, we can't put it off any longer. Let's take a look at what the Goblin dragged in this month.

Paying the Ferryman in Demons Winter

I am a Role Playing Gamer stuck in DEMONS WINTER and Bards Tale I. In DEMONS WINTER, where do I find the 'black coin' to give to the skeletal ferryman, and in Bards Tale how do I get into the corner towers?

Steve Tierney, Hemel Hempstead.

Lucky for you I have a Bards Tale Guru who knows the answers. Paul McDonough is his name and I gave his address in a recent column. Unfortunately, some plonker in the front office gave his old address. We won't cast nasturtiums as to whose fault it was (can you hear me, Merrett? (Oi! Shut ya gob, it wasn't me, it them up in art - ED!)) but here's the correct one.

Thornley Leisure Park, Stockhill, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 4EF. Don't forget the S.A.E.

As to your fare for 'old boney', look on Level 3 of Inglewood.

Successful Trapping in Legend of the Sword

Last year I bought Legend of the Sword. I am still trying to finish it and you're the only one who can help me.

How do you catch the dog who has the pipe? Where is the snare? How do you get down the well? How do I catch the Stag?

R. Dunn, Lincoln.

You been stuck on this game for a year? You sound - "R'Dunn for". (It's the way ah tell 'em!). I suppose I had better help you finish this quickly or you won't be ready for Legend II which is about to be sprung on us. There is a bone inside the cottage and that's what the dog wants. All you need do is break the bone and give it to the dog. The snare is being carried by a group of Humanoids - sounds like you need to do some more bone-breaking. There is no problem in getting down the well (at least not for someone with any sense) you simply select the DOWN icon. As for catching the beautiful and noble white stag, do just what any rotter of an adventurer would do - lay the snare for it!

Bards Tale II - Old Hat or Classic Game?

I have bought my first decent computer after years of Sinclair toys and I must say the improvement is even better than the salesman made out; but there is one major failing: BARDS TALE II is driving me mad. I've completed the first 5 dungeons (and the starter one), but I can't solve ANY of the puzzle rooms. (I can't help being stupid; it's genetic). I can't find the sword of Zar, I can't get into the tower or the crypt; and the wizard refuses point-blank to give me the Dream Spell. Please help and I'll promise to buy your excellent publication every month.

Paul Atkinson, Norfolk.

I just knew someone was going to ruin my day by sending in a question about this game. The game's publishers, Electronic Arts, have tried to help out by sending me the game and a copy of the solution book. Firstly, I can recommend that you buy the book, as it is beautifully illustrated and full of maps. They also gave me the name and telephone number of their Bard's Tale expert who they say you can ring for help. His name is Colin Dobson on 0753-49442. I was reluctant to begin playing this game as it seemed so

He's here! He's still as big a jerk as ever! Yes, God's biggest mistake, Leisure Suit Larry, returns for another go at the dating game .

dated compared with the likes of Dungeon Master, but I must confess that after spending a couple of hours with my group I became quite attached to them. It's strange how you can feel quite protective towards a group of computerised characters and feel good when you can bring them safely back to the Guild House. I found mapping a very awkward process with this game, but I expect you can get used to it. Definitely a classic game worth looking into.

Lost in the Fog and Myth!

I am playing the Magnetic Scrolls adventure, MYTH. I have managed to collect the leaves, fruit and reed, and sacrifice the lamb, but I can't get past the many-headed Hydra who guards the gate to Hades.
T. Anderson, Leeds.

Well I've got bad news for you - this is the easiest problem in the game! Looks like things are going to get pretty 'hellish', very quickly. There are two ways of getting into hell, (three if you count being stuck in a tree house and forced to answer endless questions from adventurers!). The first is to walk around the monster by going through the swamp, using the hollow reed as a breathing tube. The second is to extract the poison from the leaves which you have. Put the leaves on the flat stone and rub them with the other one. If you put the extracted liquid on your prong (Ooh-er!), you can kill the hydra with your trident.

The Key to Bloodwych's Serpent Tower

Having finally sussed out the maze, my brother and I have found the five towers each with a door, but we only have one key. The key is called the Serpent Key so we opened the door to the Serpent Tower. Behind this door are three traps and another door.

We have tried endless attempts to open the door but to no avail. Please, beg, grovel, bum-lick give us advice.
Geoff Williams, Hastings.

Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade has been causing a few headaches, so stay tuned for next month's full playing guide to Lucafilm's biggest and best game yet.

Well, as you have done pretty good so far, I expect I should give you a hand up. I will warn you that things start to get pretty sneaky around this point. From the scribbled scroll which I found in the dust outside the Keep, the following should help out. Go to the Serpent Tower and press the button. Back over the stairs a new passage has appeared. Return and kill the dragon to get a new key from a ledge. Just around the corner from there is a number of buttons - press them all and return to the tower. Back at the tower go to the right of the pillar and get the gem. But look out for the ...Aaargh!

Leisure Suit Larry

I can't get into the Disco because I have not got a membership card.
D. Baverstock, Plymouth.

Someone from Plymouth who can't get into a Disco - that's a laugh. I seem to remember that it's difficult to get into anything else in Plymouth. I recall being given a map of the naughty places in Plymouth that should be avoided. Gosh, that was a night to remember. At least it must have been, because I can't remember a damn thing about it. The solution to your problem is to be found in the ashtray in the entrance hall of the Casino. Someone obviously decided that they would perhaps be luckier with the cards than with love. Hope you do better.

Two kindly mortals have written to help me for a change. The first is James Gadd of South Glamorgan who is evidently a Dungeon Master fan as he has sent a comprehensive list of the spells and potions which can be cast and mixed. This is a wicked game which should be avoided by all adventure fans who like to go to bed at night.

The second human looking for immortality in the Boggit's Biestiary is D. Stephenson of Herts. He sent five closely-typed pages plus a map, giving a complete solution to Kings Quest IV. Now that's pretty clever, considering Kings Quest IV ain't yet released for the Amiga. You are obviously a closet Atari user trying to upset me. I've already had my jock-strap put through the mangle for falling for that one, so I ain't going to get caught again.

Right, that's the height of it for this month. (Mmmm, shouldn't have mentioned height, touchy subject that.) I'm off for another stroll round the petunia patch before bed. Keep the scrolls coming, but how about a few more offers of help just for a change?

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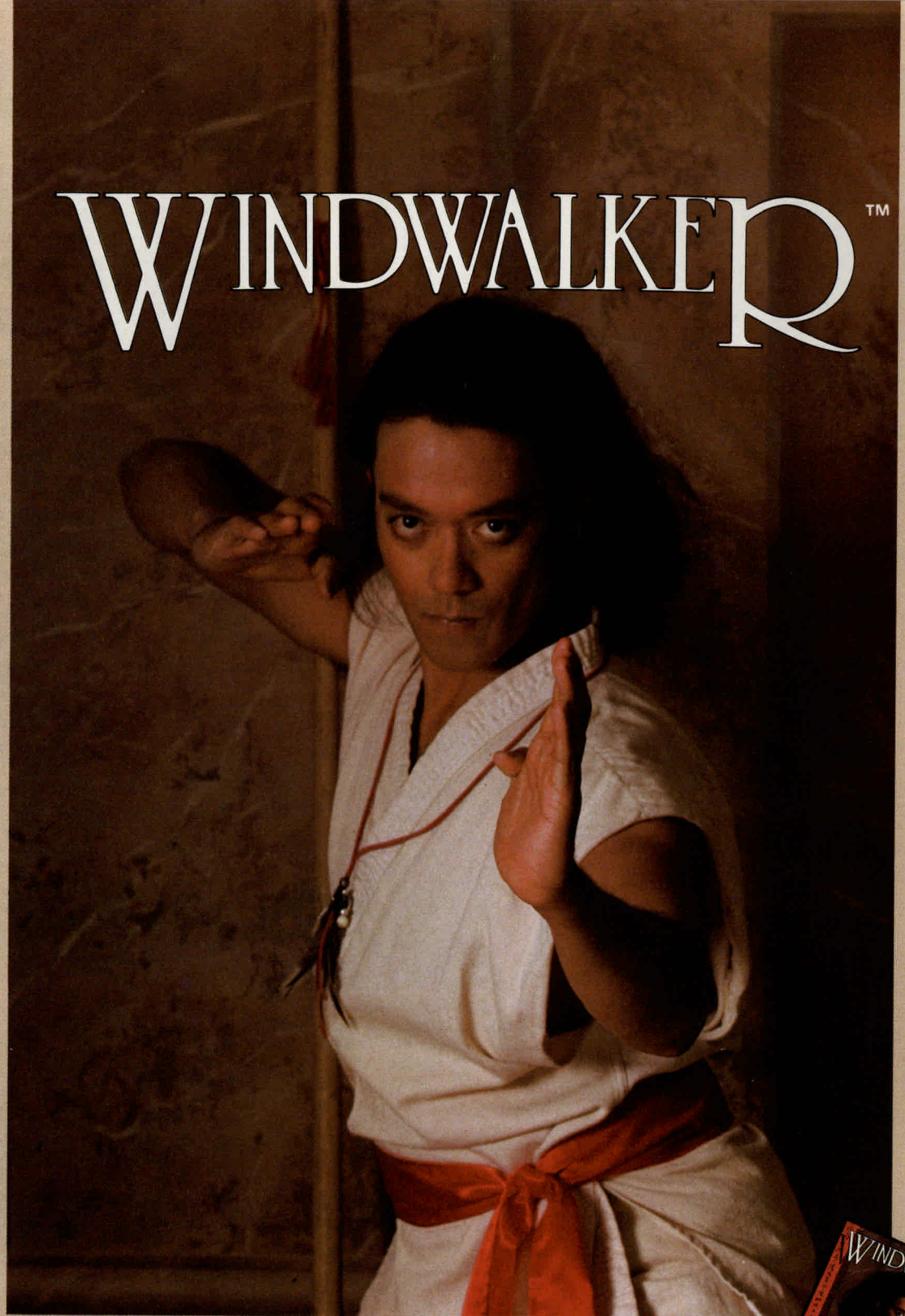

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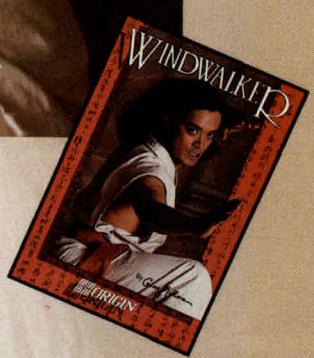

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SPACE QUEST III

Guess the name of the year's biggest arcade-game sensation? Correct, it's ASTRO-CHICKEN!

Whadya mean, you've never heard of it? Why, it's the talk of the galaxy. The funny thing is, the authors of the game have completely disappeared. The smart talk along the space-lanes is that they've been kidnapped by Elmo Pugg - the notorious head of SCUMSOFT.

Our hero, Roger, has ended up in the belly of a garbage ship. To construct a new ship in time to save the future of computer games ain't going to be easy.

Using artists from the TV world, Sierra-on-Line have created the nearest thing to an animated, cartoon adventure. By turning down the difficulty level, and turning up the fun-factor, they have produced a game which would raise a belly-laugh from an Acturian Swamp Crocodile.

In addition to solving puzzles, the game contains a number of arcade sections. You must play a space-battle game and control a giant Transformer Robot in a deadly boxing match. There is even a chance to lose a few buckazoids playing the fabulous Astro-Chicken game.

SK

What can you say about Sierra games that hasn't already been said. The graphics are great, the gameplay a joy and the sound is reasonable. So what's different about this game all the others? Well, there are two main differences. The first is it's a lot easier than previous games and, secondly, it's a lot funnier. While it is easier it still has its moments and I found it a joy to play. I particularly enjoyed the brand of humour incorporated into this game. It has got to be the most amusing of the Sierra games that I've played to date.

ANDY

A really great game. Lots of fun for all the family. If you have trouble getting the rest of your friends to share your obsession with computer games, let them spend a few moments with this little beauty and they'll begin to understand the fascination. It's probably the easiest of the Sierra games which is both it's advantage and weakness. If you treat it like a puzzle to be solved, you may plough through it like a laser through butter. Instead, enjoy the journey, investigate the gruesome 'dead-ends', and laugh.

GRAPHICS

Top-line animation, probably the best so far from Sierra. The opening sequence looks exactly like an excerpt from a TV adventure cartoon.

84%

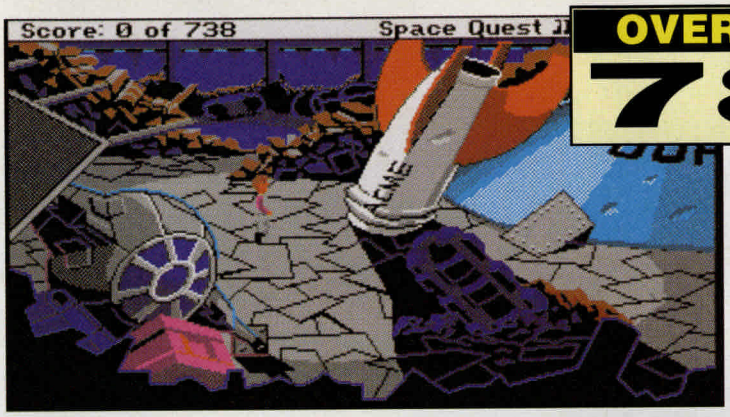
SOUND

Lots of music and sound-effects liven up the fun. But for a real blast you need to have the Roland CM-32L sound module fitted to your system to hear the fantastic music.

79%

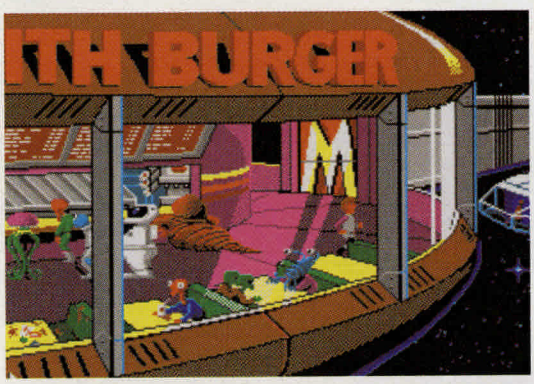
OVERALL RATING

78%

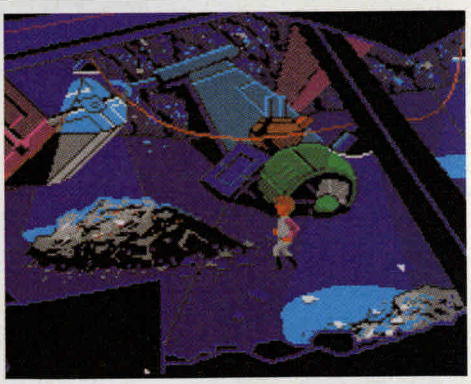


Looks like journey's end for your escape capsule. A giant space-hoover is about to scoop you up into its dust-bag.

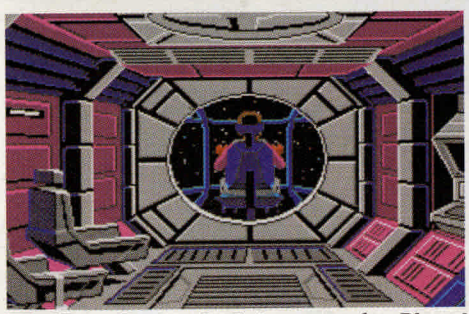
(Below) Now we appear to have got into the basement, perhaps we can shed some light on the problem of a power source.



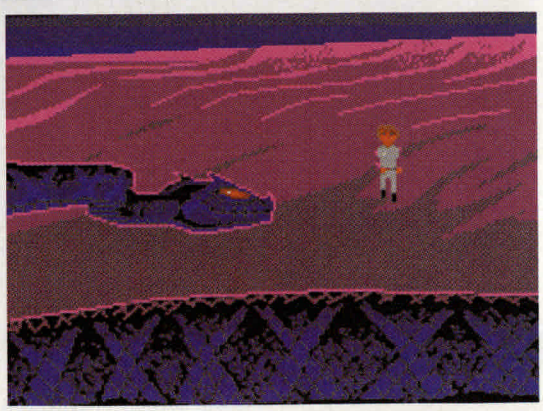
This must be the fastest drive-in this side of Pestulon. Stop here for the mega-burger-whopper with added grease that is sure to satisfy the hungriest space-fiend. Eat your heart out, Ronald MacDonald!



(Below) Some vacation planet this is. Lots of sand, but the tide appears to have gone out permanently. Guess we better look around for the theme park which is nearby.



Warp Factor 3. Set course for Planet Pestulan and engage Forward Shields. Fasten your seat-belts folks, this is pirate country and things are about to get hectic.



CROSSBOW

The legend of William Tell

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WHITEY

As with all Cinemaware games, It Came From The Desert's audio and visual effects are outstanding; probably the best seen in any of their games. One of the most impressive features of the game is 45-second intro that sets the scene. Throughout the action, an atmospheric, eerie tune plays, complementing the game no end. Also, the gameplay is good, which is where other games have failed. Overall, It Came From The Desert is Cinemaware's best game to date, and you should seriously think about buying it.

CINEMAWARE £24.95

IT CAME FROM THE DESERT

SOUND

As with the graphics, the sound, too, is excellent. A foreboding tune plays when the ants approach, and each location has a suitable jingle. Likewise, the chittering sound of the ants is extremely effective.

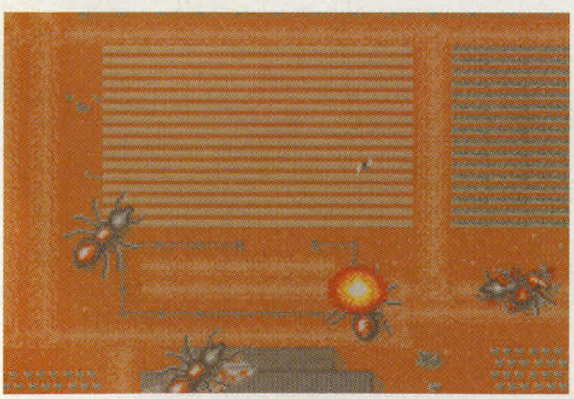
95%

For years, the small desert-based town of Lizard's Breath had kept out of the public's eye. A small community, with a population of roughly 120, Lizard's Breath contained only what was needed to keep it going: a garage, a hospital, and a small police force. This peace, however, was to be shattered late one night by the screaming arrival of a glowing asteroid that burrowed itself deep in the mountains to the north of the small town. At first, there was the normal gossip and speculation about the now-dormant rock, but only small-talk, and the matter soon passed and normality ensued once more. It wasn't until strange things began to happen, though, that the authorities raised an eyebrow and sent someone to check the stories out - that person is you.

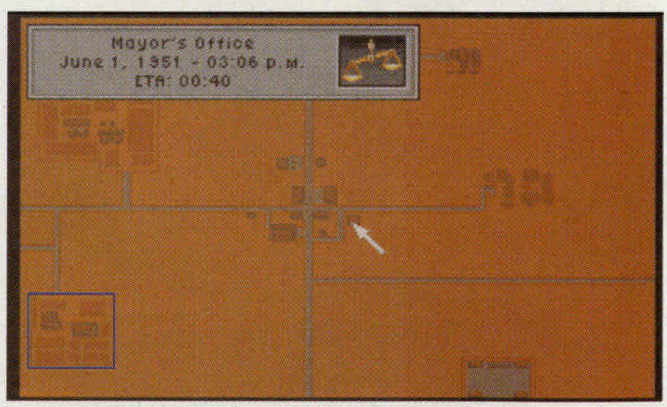
As a minerologist, you have been told to gather as much information about the meteor as you can and generally placate the gossiping locals. As you begin your research with the aid of your useful sidekick and general dogsbody, Biff, you stumble across stories of strange sightings at the town's neighbouring mines, and the discovery of one of the local farmer's cows - beheaded by some powerful force. With these clues, as you gather more information, and interact with useful sources of information (such as the Editor of the Lizard's

As the game loads, the story is set as a B-movie-style voice-over tells of the ancient prophecy of the meek inheriting the Earth. A prophecy which is about to come true as a strange glowing asteroid lands in the nearby mountain range.

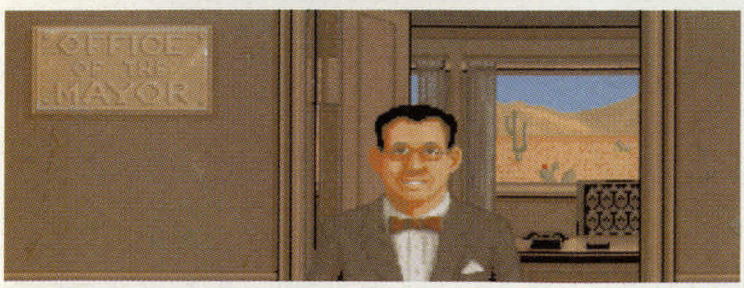
The game begins with you and your loyal colleague, Biff, in a small rented hut in the centre of Lizard's Breath. There is a knock on the door, and one of the locals, Geez the prospector, hands you a sample of glowing rocks that he found in the mountains.



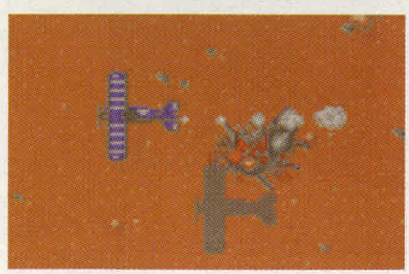
(Left) Having destroyed an ant, you are horrified to see several others appearing from under the ground. Luckily, though, you are carrying several grenades, and can use these to blast a way back to safety.



Travelling from place to place is effected via this scrolling map. A cursor is used to set your destination, and an ETA is given. The people in Lizard's Breath work normal nine-to-five hours, so try to follow the same pattern, and make sure you get at least eight hour's sleep or you'll fall asleep behind the wheel.



Before the authorities can be alerted to the imminent menace, the Mayor must be given solid evidence that the giant ants exist. Four pieces of evidence are needed, including a plaster cast of a footprint and the sample of rock Geez found.



Finding the ant's nest or recording the noise they make is made easier by hiring one of Louie, the local pilot's, planes. Mastering the plane's controls is a sub-game in itself, but essential in completing the game.

GRAPHICS

Nothing short of superb. Every care has been taken to make the game look and feel like a 1950's B-movie, and the programmers have succeeded.

96%

STEVE

It Came From The Desert is probably the best game to come from Cinemaware yet. As can be expected from Cinemaware, the graphics and sound are superb - and I defy anyone not to be impressed by the superb intro as the game loads - and both work well together, making the game a perfect replica of the films it is based on. Gathering the clues to prove the ant's existence grips you from the start, and when the ants start attacking the local buildings and the villagers started panicking, the game got so engrossing it's almost like being there! Basically, this is the most original, gripping and fun-to-play game I have encountered in a long, long time. Get it now, and prepare to star in your own B-movie.

DOUG

If you thought that Rocket Ranger was about as good as Cinemaware was going to get, then It Came From The Desert is here to prove you wrong. The graphics are about the same standard, and the sound is really atmospheric. The gameplay, however, is slightly better than in previous Cinemaware games, with a lot more to both see and do. Buy this game at all costs.

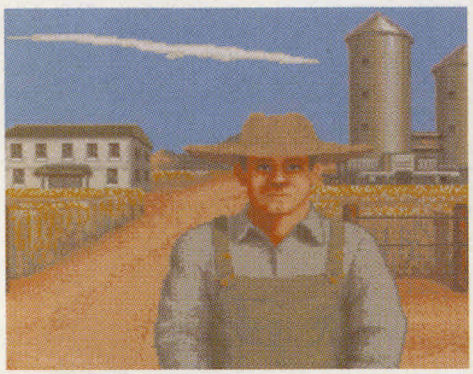
Breath Star, the team at the hastily-built research lab, and even the local manual workers), you begin to piece together an unbelievable story which stems from the meteor's strange glowing rays. It transpires that a nest of ants has been affected by the radioactive rays, and have mutated to up to two-hundred times their normal size - what's worse, they're hungry, and Lizard's Breath is the first stop in their trail of destruction.

It Came From The Desert is a two-part game, and your initial task is to gather as much information and evidence on the new breed of giant ants to convince the blinkered mayor to warn the authorities and, more importantly, inform the nearby army base. You begin your arduous task on a sunny July day, and are given an imposing time-limit - in the form of the approaching ants - in which to organise protection for the hapless townies. The second part of the game then covers the ensuing battle between you and your motley band of policemen, the army and various villagers against the might of the enormous insects. All of the action is depicted in the usual Cinemaware style of detailed graphics and film-like soundtracks, and the main task is split into several arcade-style sub-games which introduce you to the various inhabitants of the game and allow you to witness the true strength of the marauding insects.

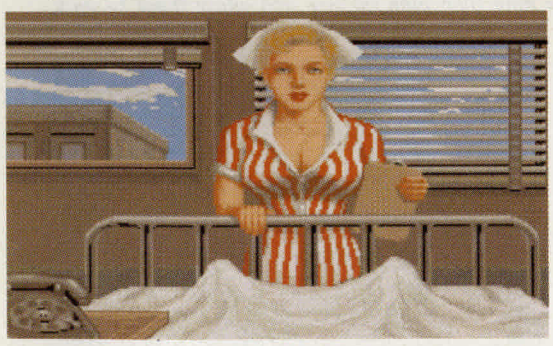
AMIGA ACTION

OVERALL RATING

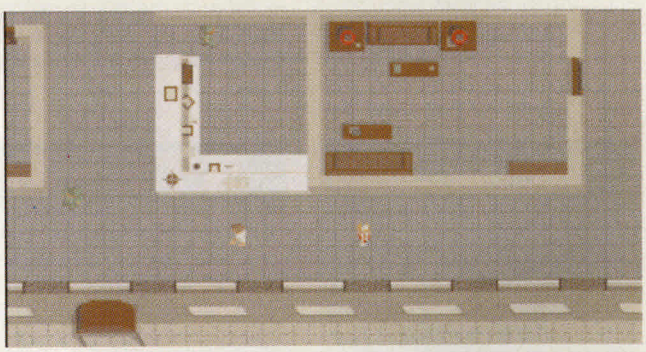
91%



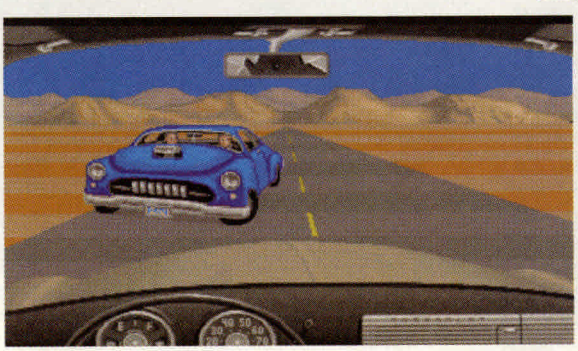
(Above & right) Following up the various information you glean, your info takes you to the local farm, where a decapitated cow has been found. As you question the farmhand, though, your chat is interrupted by one of the reasons for the recent strange behaviour - a twenty-foot-tall ant! Drawing your gun, you must blast away at it, but it can only be felled when shot in the correct spots - but where?



(Left & right) Should you ever fall foul to the many dangers around, you will wake up in hospital to face this buxom beauty. Accepting the treatment costs you valuable time, but an escape can be risked - but don't get caught!



The Hellcats are Lizard's Breath's answer to the Hell's Angels, and often like to indulge in a deadly game of 'Chicken'. As they roar towards you, you must either swerve out of their way or out-chicken them. Either way, they will be out to get you again.



The police station is the centre of all operations when you have gained enough evidence and got the authorities on your side. From here, you can position the few men you have, and attempt to wipe out the ants for good.

GREMLIN £19.95

BLUE ANGEL '69

Behind the futuristic scenario and presentation of Blue Angel 69 lies a very simple puzzle game. As a punter in an intergalactic pleasure bar, you have been challenged to the local game by a number of the bar's robotic temptresses. The idea behind the game is to collect more points than your opponent, and success results in you seeing your mechanical opponent semi-clad or totally nude. However, as you make your way through the many opponents, they are replaced by quick-thinking, more advanced droids, and the rewards for victory get better - it's enough to make you blow a fuse!

The game is played on a chequered board, and covering this board are two different types of numbered counters: orange and purple. Play is controlled via the mouse, with the player positioning the cursor and pressing the left button to select his chosen counter, and you only have horizontal control over your cursor, whilst the computer-controlled 'females' can only move theirs vertically. Play begins with you starting, and your main objective is to collect as many of the high-value purple counters, while forcing your opponent to collect the orange ones; the game ends when all of the counters have been collected, or when one of the players reaches zero points. The tiles range in value from one point to a massive eleven, and the key to the game is collecting the highest value counters while making sure that there are no high-value counters for your opponent to collect along the vertical axis. In addition, each move must be made before a short timer expires; failure to do so, results in the player forfeiting a go.

GRAPHICS

Presentation throughout the game is good, with the pictures of the stylised robots looking particularly good in the blue colours used. Apart from them, though, there's not a lot to mention.

47%

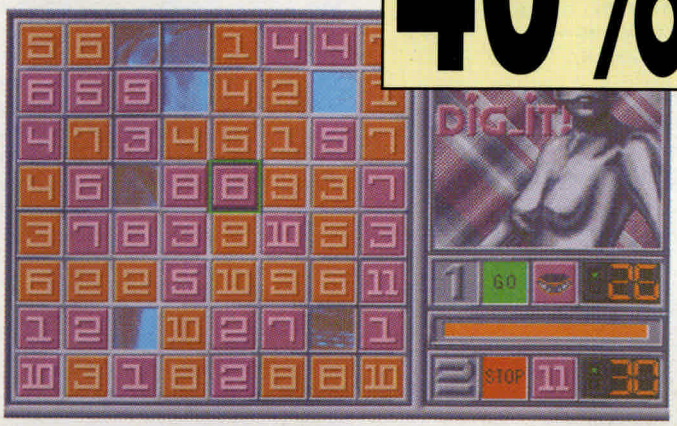
SOUND

An average tune plays at the start of the game, and during the game, but is backed up by the dulcit sampled tones of your female opponent.

48%

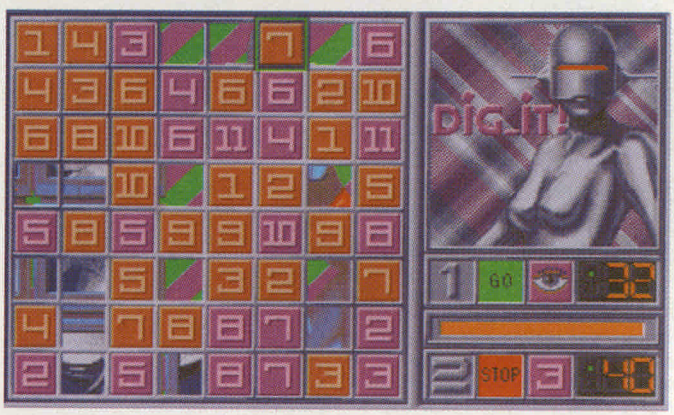
OVERALL RATING

40%

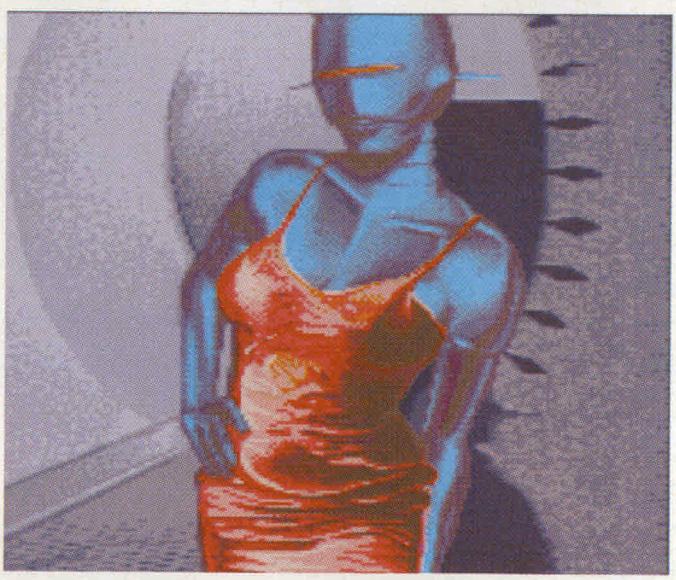


You begin the game with control of the board, and this is a good time to plan ahead. Even if there is a ten counter waiting to be collected, be careful to make sure there isn't an eleven one above or below it for your opponent to collect.

If you are feeling really masochistic, you can play the game with the numbers removed from the counters. This means that it is pure luck if you win, but is fun all the same.



Things can get pretty tight towards the end of a screen, so remember it's better to lose seven points and force your opponent to lose nine than pick up one and allow them to pick up four.



And here it is... your ultimate prize! Sparkling provocatively in the sunlight, your nubile opponent flashes her chrome at you - somehow, I think I prefer the real thing!

DOUG

To be quite frank, Blue Angel is going to keep you amused for about the same amount of time as it takes you to get the disk out of the box. The main idea behind the game is to get rid of little squares so that you can see pictures of really sexy robots; well I'm not that turned on by robots, and I can't say the game's playability made up for it. Blue Angel is one of the worst games I've seen for a long time.

STEVE

Although goggling over pictures of metal women never appealed to me, the simple but brain-stretching gameplay of Blue Angel 69 did. What started off a doddle to beat got consistently harder, and I grew more impatient to beat it. However, that said, it isn't going to appeal to everybody, and I feel it's rather pricey for what it offers. Still, the Amiga hasn't got many puzzle games and this comes as a welcome surprise.

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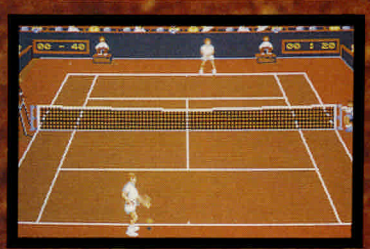

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ARC £19.95

HELLRAIDER

SOUND

The usual zaps and bangs but nothing oustanding. A nice piece of music on the title screen.

48%

GRAPHICS

Well defined, but rather small and boring graphics due to the use of colour. The aliens are of a kind shot countless times before, and the game looks dated.

50%

STEVE

I can't say I was particularly impressed by Hellraider. The graphics are small and undetailed, and the sound minimal, but, what's worse, is that the gameplay is uninteresting and dull. Scooting around the planet's surface soon gets repetitive, and attacking the odd alien base did nothing to relieve the tedium either. Basically, Hellraider is a very dull shoot'em-up that would be more suited to an 8-bit machine, and offers nothing new or original.

Hell. That's the name the planet has brought upon itself, due to the mass of volcanic activity that occupies the surface of this distant planet. But there is one thing that keeps the interest of the Empire in this planet: the surface also contains huge numbers of precious gems that will bring a fortune to the person who can manage to get hold of just one.

You have been elected to pilot a Raider, a ship that can scour the surface of the planet for gems, while still withstanding the tremendous heat that is generated there. Inside the Raider there's also another four smaller vessels: orbitals. Although these small ships can't collect the precious stones below, they are perfect for fighting enemy forces in the midst of the fiery landscape of Hell. Recently, the alien activity of Hell has multiplied, and the Raiders job has been made quite a bit harder, so, because of your unbelievable piloting skill you have been chosen to go down and sort out these aliens, as well as get your mits on a few of those priceless gems.

During the game you can either control the Raider with its eight guns, as it collects the various stones, or put the Raider on automatic pilot and launch one of the speedy orbitals from its docking bay to protect the Raider. If the orbital you're piloting gets low on energy, you re-dock with the Raider and send out one of your other orbitals to fight, while the damaged ship re-energizes. Only you can succeed in this task, and only you are stupid enough to try!

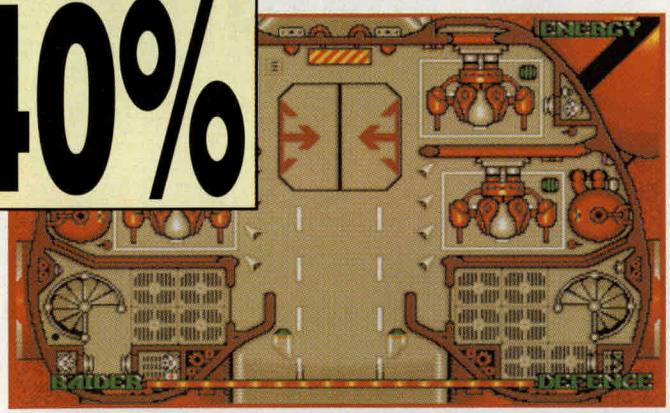
DOUG

Hellraider is another run-of-the-mill shoot'em-up, with not a lot else to offer. The games manual is very large, and there's a huge section describing the story behind the game, but after you've read it you'll do exactly the same as before, and shoot anything that isn't you. The controls are very awkward, and moving in to the right position to fire at something can become annoying. Not something I'd rush out and buy.

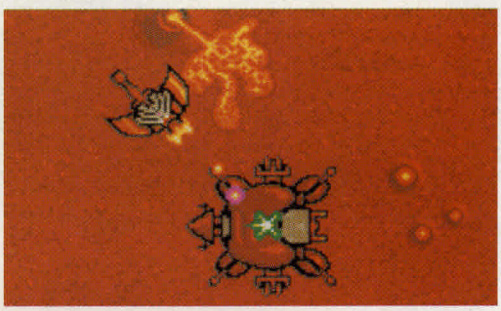
OVERALL RATING

40%

Putting the Raider into auto you choose one of the four Orbitals to fly across the planet of Hell, but don't stray too far, you never know when you might want to dock again.

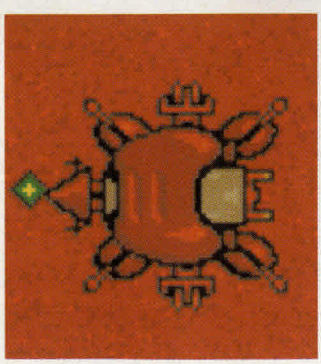


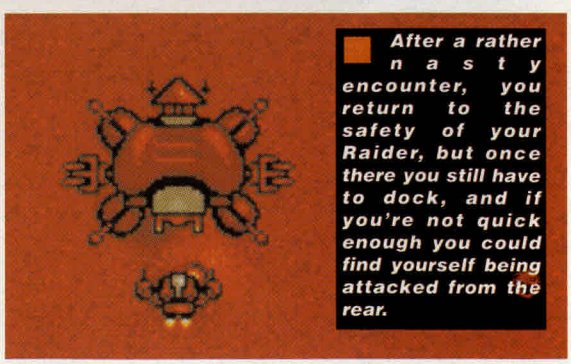
Turning on your inbuilt radar, you hunt down the remaining aliens in the vicinity. You can also locate your Raider from here just in case you get into a bit of trouble.



You find one of the enemy's bases and, before you reach the centre, you come across the welcoming committee. A large gun implacement blasts away at you doing more damage than you'd actually like.

(Left) Using the Raider's awesome firepower you blast at a closing fighter.





After a rather nasty encounter, you return to the safety of your Raider, but once there you still have to dock, and if you're not quick enough you could find yourself being attacked from the rear.

(Right) Without the Raider, destroying the enemy would be a lot easier, but, unfortunately, Orbitals can't collect the gems you're after; and to make matters worse, the Raider is incredibly slow.

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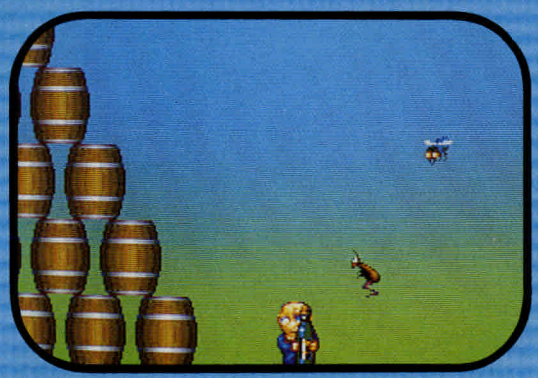

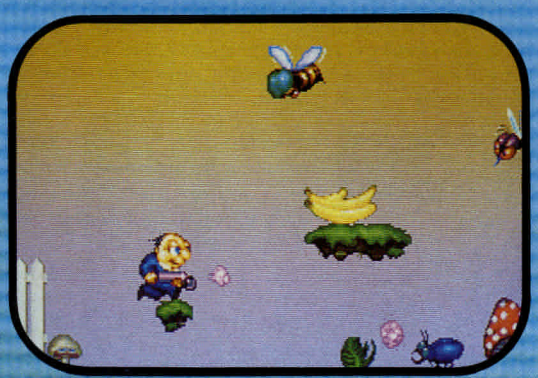

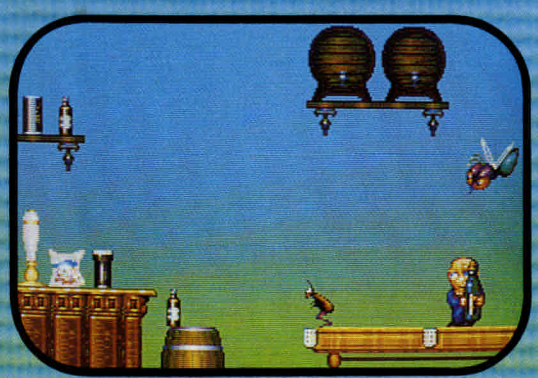

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SCREEN SHOTS FROM AMIGA VERSION

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Dynamic Debugger was designed and produced by Interactive Pixels. Commodore Amiga version programmed by Andy Reece and Jan Knox. Graphics and cover illustration by Pete Lyon. Music arranged by Anthony Ellis. Not for distribution to the Republic of South Africa.

image works

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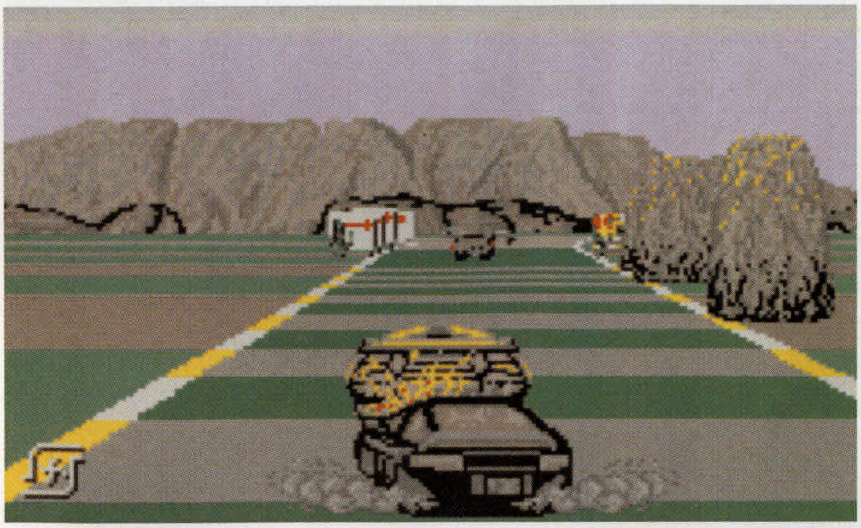
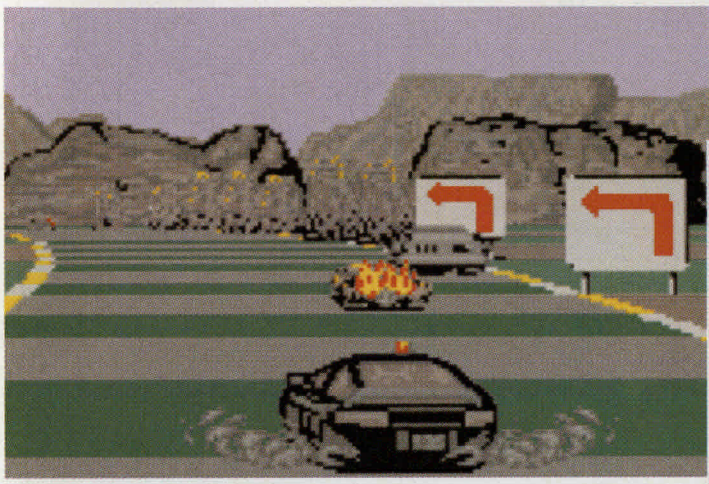
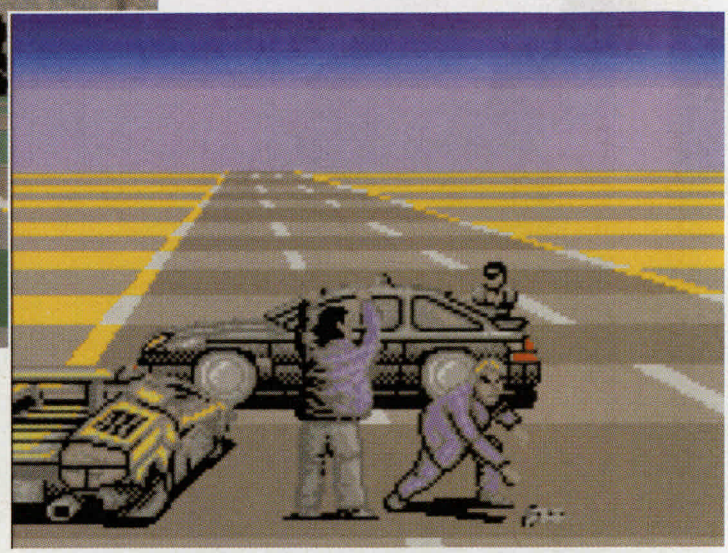


At the top right-hand side of the screen, there is a distance counter which informs you how close you are to your criminal. As he gets closer, his anonymity is smashed by a very conspicuous arrow pointing to his vehicle. Engaging one of your three turbos, you must then repeatedly ram his car and, as you do so, a guage shows how close he is to pulling over. "Push it more!" mumbles the computer as the damage starts to take a toll, and his car starts smoking. Eventually, his car in flames, he pulls over, allowing you to disarm him and take him back to the station.





(Left) Meet N.A.N.C.Y., your friendly station computer. At the end of each stage, she informs you of your next job, and gives the run-down on the perp in question, including details on what he is wanted for and what vehicle he is driving.

DOUG

Ocean have got hold of yet another top-ranking arcade game, and have probably converted it as best they could but, as usual, the game lacks the playability of the arcade version. As a game in itself, Chase HQ is quite playable and good fun, but I can see the game becoming boring very quickly. If you liked the arcade version, then you'll probably enjoy this game.

OCEAN £24.99

CHASE HQ

Ocean's licencing deal with Taito has produced some excellent conversions - Operation Wolf and New Zealand Story, for instance - and this Christmas they are hoping to continue this trend with the release of Operation Thunderbolt and this long-awaited conversion of the Miami Vice-style driving game, Chase H.Q. The game has been converted by Teque (the team behind the recent conversion of Toobin' for Domark and responsible for bringing the Thunderbirds to life for Grandslam), and they have attempted to squeeze as much from the action-packed coin-op into the Amiga as possible - and they have even managed to retain some of the sampled speech that made the original coin-op so impressive. The game centres around the car-based exploits of two Miami cops, as they follow their orders to round up the city's drug pushers, known murderers, and pimps. Seated within their sleek black sports car, they must cruise the mean streets, chasing the bad guys and ramming them off the road, before arresting them and taking them back to the station where fresh orders will be given for the next level.

The action is viewed from behind the car, in third-person perspective, and the road and its occupants and hazards all scroll past you as you tear along the busy winding streets. As in most race games, your car has two gears, and is capable of up to 320mph. This is just as well, though, as all of the action is set against a time-limit of just sixty seconds, and within this short time, you must run the criminal off the road and detain him. To help you your car is fitted with three turbo boosters and, when activated by a press of the space bar, these prompt your two characters to sound their siren, followed by a burst of power to your car's engine, allowing you to reach your top speed in no time at all. In addition, when the vehicle

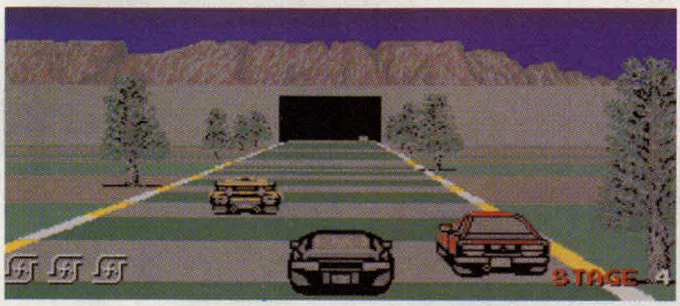
AMIGA ACTION

OVERALL RATING

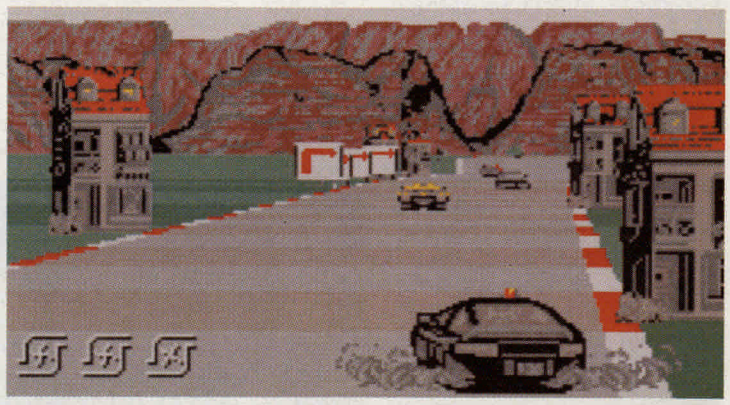
82%

Contact with the other cars reduces your speed slightly, costing you valuable time, but it is often better than swerving around them and skidding off the road completely.

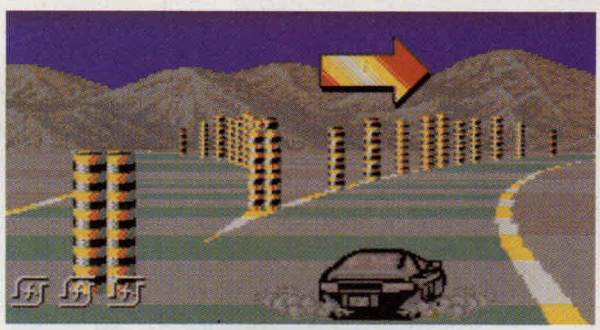
(Below) The number of turbos remaining are shown at the bottom of the screen, and are accessed by pressing the space bar. As you do so, one of your cops engages the siren, and you roar off with your acceleration practically doubled.



Your car is joystick-controlled, with acceleration and lane changes performed using the directional controls. In addition, your car only has two gears, and changing between these is achieved using the firebutton.



Every now and then, the road forks, and an arrow will appear indicating the route you should take. Just to be safe, it is always best to take the computer's advice.



Tunnels are frequent affairs in Chase H.Q., and are always packed with road hogs and bad drivers - and normally result in you scraping your nice paintwork against the tunnel wall and slowing down.

of the wanted criminal comes into view, they can be used to ram into him repeatedly, wearing down his resistance rapidly until he pulls over.

Along the way, you will encounter all manner of bad drivers and road-side obstacles, and contact with these results in your car slowing down or spinning uncontrollably off the road, costing you valuable time. If you fail to detain the criminal within the allotted time, you will be taken off the case, and it is game over. Make it, though, and N.A.N.C.Y, your squad's talking computer, will brief you on your next mission, and will give you details of the nature of the crime the villain is wanted for, and the type of car he was last seen driving. With that information, you are then sent out again, only this time the level is slightly harder, which means that you can't afford to waste any time.

ALEX

I never played Chase H.Q. in the arcades, so I can't tell you how well it has been converted; on the other hand, I can tell you that I enjoyed playing the conversion. The speed of the car racing down the road wasn't particularly fast or amazing, but some good sampled speech from the coin-op version had been included. The graphics were easily adequate for the game, as were the spot sound effects - what's more, there is a long-term challenge for all of you crime-busting cops. If you enjoyed the coin-op, you should love this. Go out and take a look, you shouldn't be disappointed.

GRAPHICS

At first, they seem a bit small, but they move swiftly and the update is fast. The roadside objects could do with a bit more detail, though.

67%

SOUND

Chase features some superb sampled sound, which is crystal clear. In addition, there are a few neat overtaking sounds, but a weak in-game tune.

73%

STEVE

OK, so granted it, doesn't have the superb graphics that the arcade game enjoyed, but Chase H.Q. does capture all of the frantic feel of the original coin-op. Each stage is set against a very strict time-limit, and getting to the criminal and ramming him off the road in this short time can be extremely nerve-wracking! It is this 'feel' that makes Chase a superior race game and, while it won't appeal to purist arcade-goers, it does make for one of the best race games in quite a while.

INFOGRAMES £19.99

SIM CITY

SOUND

Not much to speak of but in this sort of game you don`t really need sound. So if you're that desperate, just turn on a handy hi-fi.

50%

GRAPHICS

Basic graphics that simply represent the comings and goings of the city as it progresses through out the stages of under your control - not usually a pretty sight.

38%

STEVE

In a way, Sim City is like Populous, except that your actions have a greater effect on the population. Your ultimate aim is to make a city that everybody would want to live in, and this means that a lot of thought and thinking ahead is needed - although I must admit I preferred just bulldozing the whole neighbourhood and leaving it at that when things got heavy! Still, fans of Populous will love this, and it deserves consideration from peple who fancy something just that little bit different.

Do you ever complain about the way things are run, and how, given the chance, you could do a much better job than the people already; well, here`s your chance. Sim City puts you in total control of a self-generated or premade city (like San Francisco or Tokyo), and presents you with the problems that the mayor of a city encounters each year. Taxes and other such desirable things will have to be changed according to the city's progress, while at the same time keeping the "Sim People" happy; because if you don`t, they`ll just pack their bags and clear off to another city, taking their tax-paying money with them.

Sim City is a new type of software called "System Simulation", which consists of two main factors known as "Rules and Tools". The Rules are based around factors connected with city planning and management: things like survival factors, where you have to learn how to deal with disasters, crime and pollution, or the more obvious things to do with the economics, such as land value, unemployment, and taxation. Tools let you create and control the city from a large selection of icons listed on the right-hand side of the screen. Train stations, hospitals, industrial plants, police stations and residential areas can and must be included for you to have a successful city.

There are two main ways to play the game, both having the objective of ending up with a successful and prosperous city. The first is to start from scratch and totally create your own "dream" city starting with a certain amount of money; the second is having to save a city from some kind of disaster that has already happened. Whichever you choose, you`ll have your work cut out.

DOUG

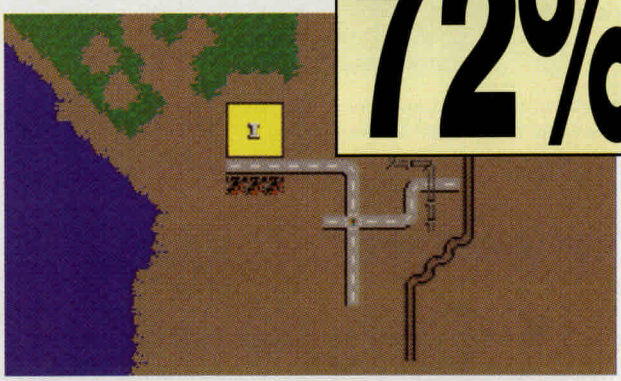
Sim City is a very well made and thought out program that seems to cover a lot of what goes into running a city, but only the strategically minded with quite a bit of patience should go in for this type of game. Sim City is the fist game of this type and the system it uses looks it could be easily converted to some other type of simulation for future products. If you're not that keen on strategy games, perhaps it's not for you.

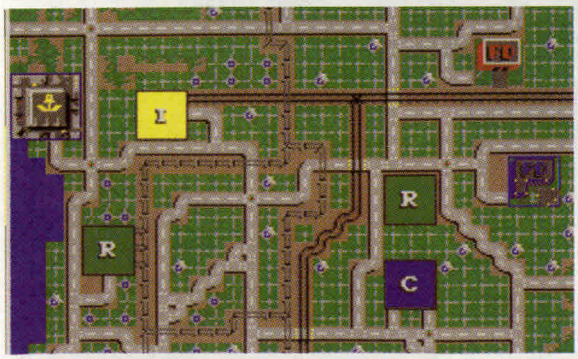
OVERALL RATING

72%

After just a short pause the computer generates a whole new landscape for you to build on and make your home, but if you don`t like the look of it, just generate a new one.

At last you find a piece of land that seems to look about right, but now you have to start building, while still keeping a beady eye on your budget.





It doesn`t take long to build your city and just as quickly spend your money. What was just a simple piece of land a few minutes ago is now a complex city.

While playing Sim City you mustn`t forget about the most important thing, the inhabitants. Every little thing must be catered for to keep them happy, even a football stadium.

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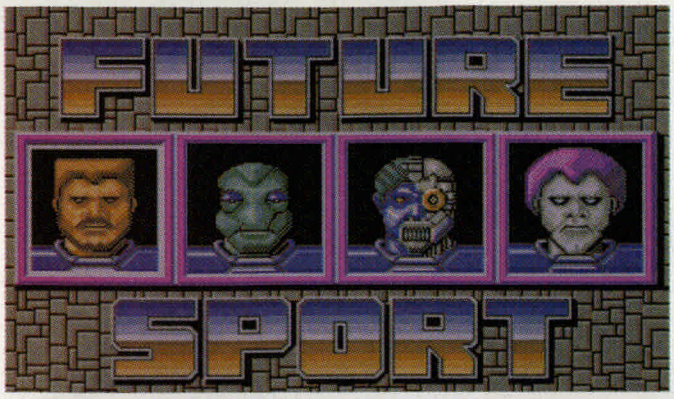
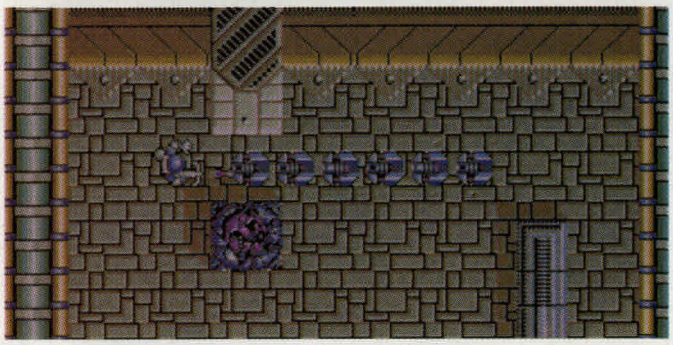
OVERALL RATING

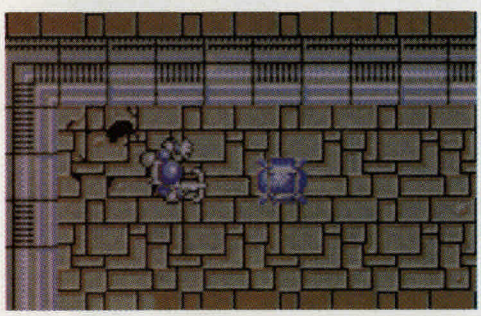
46%

There are four competitors, each one willing to take the gamble of death or freedom.



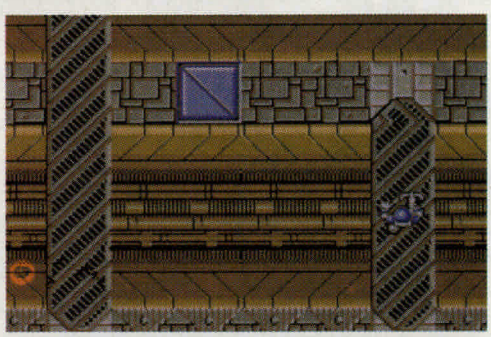


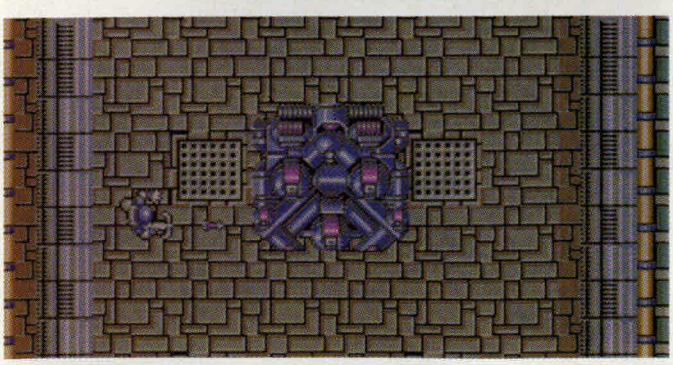
As you progress through the zone, your enemies will appear more often and become larger in numbers. A quick blast from your laser crossbow will dispose of them in no time.



Boxes of equipment have been placed around the sports zone for you to collect, but can you get to them alive? The blue box contains the spray-gun, and the pink contains the jumps.

A chasm in the middle of the zone mars your path, And the only way across is via the rope bridge that spans in front of you. Get your gun ready and continue your journey onwards.





A number of motherships will be set against you and put a stop to your escape. Armed to the teeth, she fires everything she's got. Unfortunately, she doesn't have side lasers.

ACTUAL SCREENSHOTS £19.95

FUTURE SPORTS

Did you ever see the film The Running Man? Well, if you did then know what the story line of this game is. In Future Sport you have the choice of being one of four people who have been given the opportunity to win their freedom from prison. All they have to do is make their way through the sports zone, dodging the various traps and mechanical nasties, to the exit at the end, and to freedom. There is only one rule - stay alive.

You will be attacked at every corner making your escape as hard as possible but, along the way, you will only encounter four different types of adversary: giant men will charge at you when least expected, and much damage must they receive before they bite the dust; mechanical scorpions will scuttle across your path at regular intervals blasting away with front-mounted cannons, contact with either the bullets or the scorpions themselves will mean the loss of a life; tribesmen are very much like yourself, being armed only with a laser crossbow, but beware! They have the power to appear and disappear at will; the fourth opponent is the catapulter who will sit in a bunker in the ground and take pot shots at you: avoid him at all costs. Other motorized obstacles will occasionally race around, each coming from the least expected angle.

Extra equipment can be picked up on your way through the zone, each giving you the upper hand on the hordes of enemies that assail you. Spray-guns and jumps will be the most common items to be found, but different items can be found in the later levels.

DOUG

Future Sport is certainly a copy of the film, The Running Man, but in ow way is it similar to the game of the same name by Grand Slam. Although the game is not bad and has a few addictive qualities, it lacks much variety and becomes repetitive very quickly. I must say that Future Sport is not one of Actual Screenshots' better products and I can't really recommend it.

STEVE

With a scenario straight out of the Running Man, Future Sport is every bit as testing as the game in Arnie's film. No sooner had I made progress, then the unfair collision detection or another wave of aliens would kill me. As the game follows set patterns, though, guessing where the aliens are going to come from becomes a doddle, and, soon after, the game's appeal rapidly wanes.

GRAPHICS

Rather basic use of graphics, and not much variety. The use of colour could have made a lot of difference to the game, as well.

40%

SOUND

Like the graphics, there is nothing special , and a lot more could have been done to enhance the sounds quality, without much bother.

43%

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Screenshots from Amiga version

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HOUND OF SHADOW

You and your friend, John, arrive at the house that the girls parents told you about, and wonder to yourself why you took on a stupid case such as this: any normal family could have dealt with this themselves without having to call in a private eye. After a short wait your thoughts are broken by a small maid who answers the door and ushers you in. She asks you for your invites, which you both promptly pull out. "Right this way, Mr. Mason", she says, and beckons you through to a dark room with a large table and several other guests in it. Before long the Adept Karmi arrives, seats himself at the end of the table, and the seance starts. Being observant, you can see that the whole thing's a farce, but play a long anyway. The Adept Karmi goes through the usual whirling of the eyes and swaying of the body, and pretends to be spirits for a few of the guests, but then, suddenly, he goes rigid and stops breathing. After a short pause he starts to breath again, but not in a normal fashion, and then his eyes flick open and all they contain is madness. He looks around at one of the guests and shouts "The Hound of Shadow is upon you, and you bear his mark", and then collapses. Maybe this case isn`t going to be as easy as you thought.

Hound of Shadow is very close to the RPG game, Cthulhu, within which you control a character living in the early 1900's who accidentally becomes involved in the mysterious world of the occult. A character can be male or female (although female characters are at a disadvantage because chauvinism in those times), and have one of nine different professions. Depending on your education you are given a certain percentage of skill that can be distributed among the large selection of abilities, giving your character a percentage chance (maximum of 99%) of succeeding in an ability; however, everybody has a certain chance of doing some things, so, in the case of climbing, for instance, you automatically start with a skill of about 40%. There are seven categories of abilities that your character has, and depending on your profession you should pick only certain ones. Some abilities you you will not have at the beginning of the game, but you will gain during the course of the game and one of these abilities is "Corrupt Knowledge". This knowledge is learnt as you encounter the the evil that can lurk behind the thin barrier of everyday life and the occult, but gaining this skill is both good and bad. Although you might learn through this skill how to stop a certain thing you encounter, you might not be able to relate to the knowledge that you have found

SK

Electronic Arts' new system timeline works very well, putting the game into real time and giving you the pressure of having to race against time to get through the various stages of the game. The only thing that seems to let down the game is its parser, or lack of it, and trying to communicate with other people can become annoying. But nevertheless its a good game.

DOUG

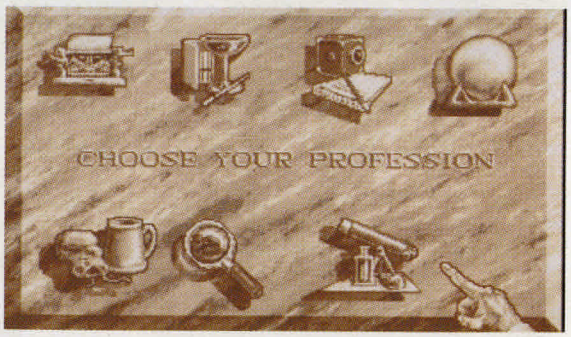
Ever since I heard that The Hound of Shadow was coming out I couldn`t wait to get my hands on it. The game has been really looked into, and great care has been taken to capture the atmosphere of the period. The character generation method is very impressive and almost the same skills as the RPG game. The game`s parser isn`t that great, though, and at times it can be quite frustrating, but the game's still brilliant.

GRAPHICS TEXT

The parser isn't particularly helpful, and communicating with the other characters is very difficult. A few more commands would have helped.

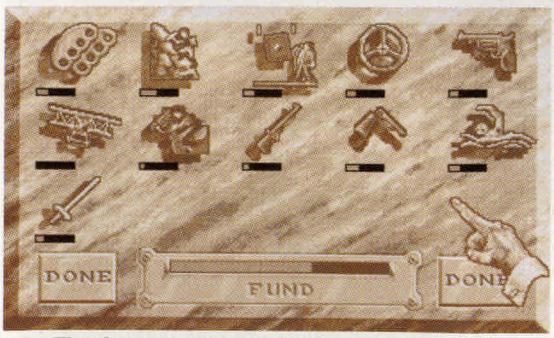
62%

Choose for your character to be male or female, but bear in mind the time period you`re in. Unfortunately, women were at a bit of a disadvantage in those days.

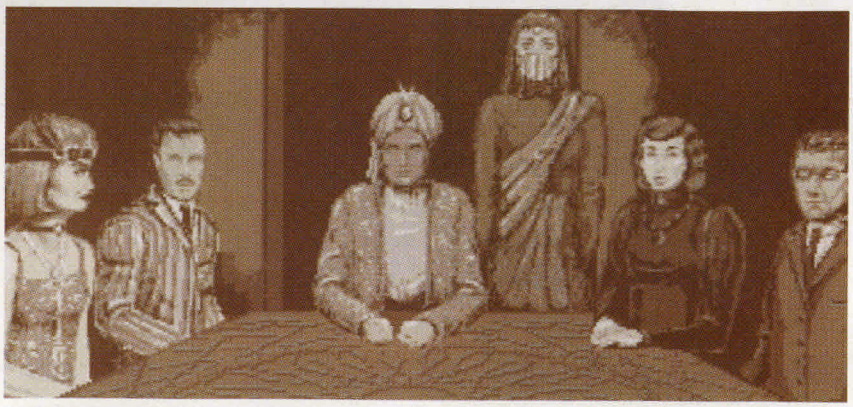


What sort of job do you fancy: private eye, journalist, or maybe just an aristocrat? Whatever your choice you`ll end up in the middle of the action.

(Below) The Adept Karmi and Yasmin are seated at the end of the table with you and the other guests down either side, but, unfortunately, the Adept Karmi is about as much Indian as you are.



Thanks to your good education and intelligence you have quite a few skill points to allocate to the abilities you wish your character to have.



out, and lose control of your sanity, thus being put in a psychiatric institution for treatment; and if this happens who will stop the evil Hound of Shadow then.

ANDY

The Hound of Shadow is a classic that weans you into the game and then grabs hold of you and won't let go. The game's story is brilliant and keeps you interested all the time, with the occasional picture to add to the atmosphere. The character generation is good and once the following Cthulhu-type adventures arrive you will be able to port your character across to the new game. Go out and buy it.

GRAPHICS

Superb atmospheric sepia graphics are used predominantly throughout the game, and the overall effect is good.

79%

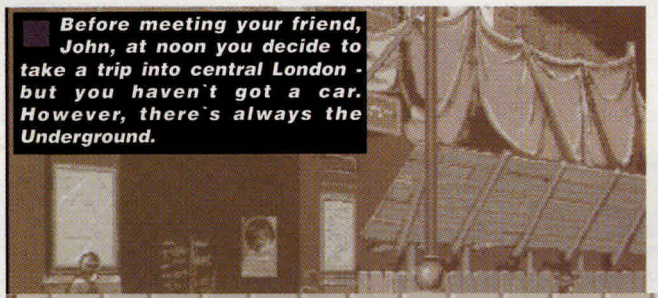
OVERALL RATING

77%

Extra skill points can be gained depending upon how long you served in the forces, but although the longer you served the more points you get, your character might be a bit unstable after all that fighting.

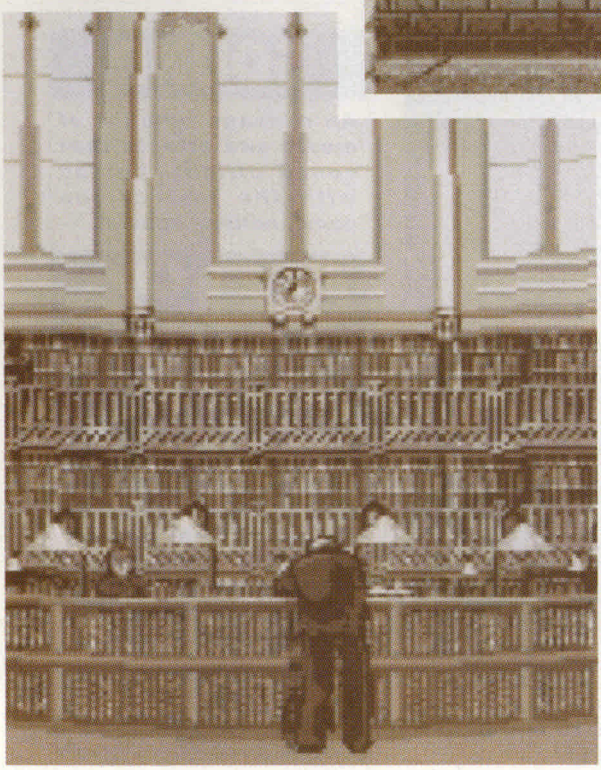
After just a short walk from your house you arrive at a nice looking green in Soho, but is there anything of interest in that little hut that may concern you?

Before meeting your friend, John, at noon you decide to take a trip into central London - but you haven't got a car. However, there's always the Underground.



The advertisements in the Underground station are just a couple of the examples of the care that has been taken to keep the atmosphere of the game going.

(Below) You finally, with a bit of persuasion, manage to get into the museum's library and start looking for something that might give you some sort of lead to follow.



The storyline takes off and you'll need some more info on the occult if you're going to get anywhere, so where better to go than the British Museum for a book?

GREMLIN £19.99

AXEL'S MAGIC HAMMER

Your girlfriend, Lucy, has been kidnapped by an evil green dragon who is quite intent on making her the dessert of his banquet this weekend, and it is up to you alone to go to the dragon`s castle and rescue her. You will have to travel through eight different kingdoms before you reach your destination, and each of these will contain their horde of nasties that are not that fond of you traipsing through their land. However, all is not lost. For many years your family has possessed a special hammer that is said to be able to contain a huge amount of magical power. If this hammer is what it is said to be, it is your only hope for conquering the evil dragon and rescuing the fair Lucy.

Starting in a Roman village, you must make your way through eight different locations, until eventually you come to the dragon`s castle and wander down into his dungeons in search of Lucy. Along the way, various objects can be found to help you in your quest, the most useful ones being those that add powers to your magical hammer. However, not all the items can be got so easily, and some will have to smashed out of stone blocks that encase them with the aid of your magical hammer. At the end of each kingdom is a special guardian that must be killed, and once this is done you will receive a key and then be able to gain access to the next level. So without further ado, go forth and save the lovely Lucy before she becomes the finishing touches to the dragon`s dinner

OVERALL RATING

56%

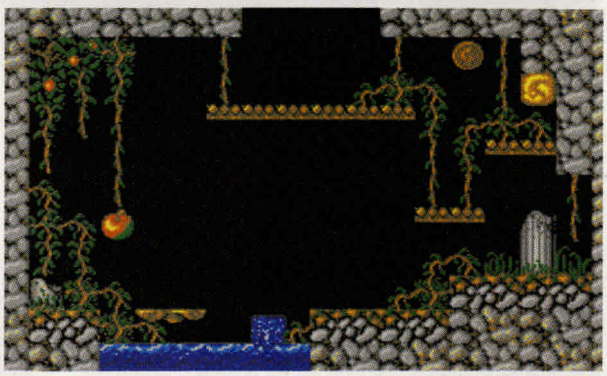
Smashing a stone block with your magic hammer, you uncover a hidden power-up for it. Once collected you will have the ability to throw your hammer at the various nasties before they get near you.

It looks like the weather isn`t even on your side. Storm clouds lurk overhead, lashing out with lightning bolts at random intervals, each one's touch causing a fair bit of damage.

Starting from the roman village you begin your mission. There`s eight places in all that you will have to travel through.

After much struggling you reach the end of the Roman Village and come face to face with a arrow-shooting statue; although the arrows can be easily avoided, how do you destroy this evil foe?

Entering the next screen you come across a handy helmet. Popping it on to your bonce, you jump around destroying all the stone blocks without the aid of your hammer.



Even with all of your special powers and objects, Axel unfortunately lacks the ability to swim, and sadly sinks to the bottom never to be seen again.

DOUG

Axel is very similar to the Super Mario type of game, but unfortunately not quite as good. Instead of having the usual horizontal scrolling, the game has a flip screen method of getting to the next bit of action, which at times becomes very annoying. Apart from this, though, the game is just about O.K., keeping your interest up for a little while. Axel is not bad, but there`s a lot better.

STEVE

This is a relatively playable little game, it's just that it is decidedly average with nothing particularly good about it. The graphics are cute but uninspiring, and the sound is twee but, apart from that, there isn't a lot I can say about it. Walking from screen to screen collecting icons and hitting snakes and birds with my hammer soon got dull, and the only thing I looked forward to was Axel's grisly death sequence, where he explodes into lots of bits of body!

SOUND

An average amount of music and effects that sound alright, but as with the rest of the game, nothing special.

50%

GRAPHICS

Nice colourful graphics that go well with this type of game. However, the scrolling is very annoying and really slows down the game, causing it to lose quite a bit of its addictiveness.

50%

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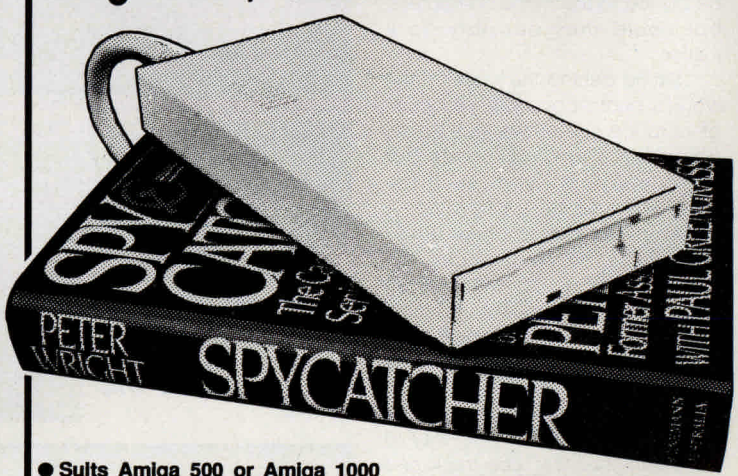

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HARD DRIVIN'

SOUND

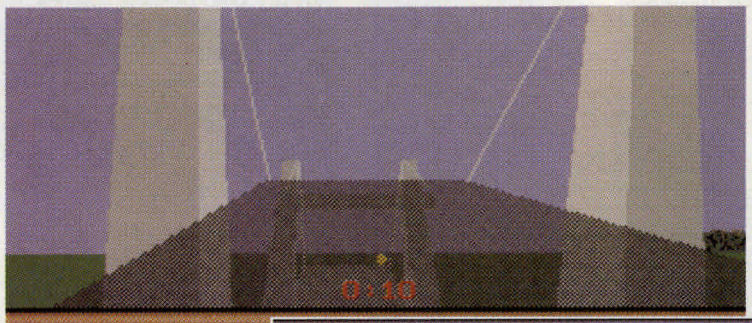
A tune, and a lot of sound effects, such as skidding tyres and revving engines; they've even ported the mooing noise the cow makes when you hit it.

65%

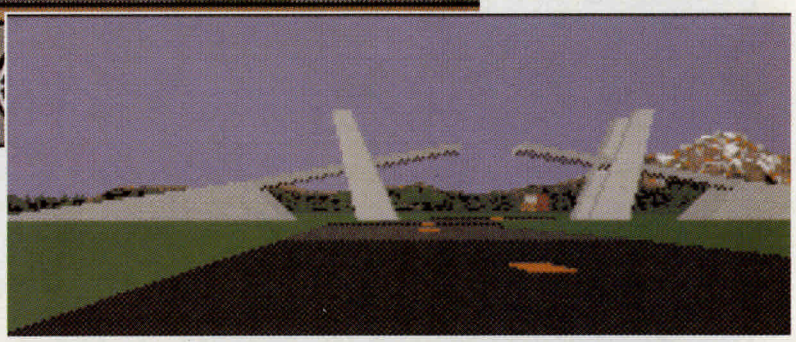
When Hard Drivin' appeared at the arcade, it wasn't exactly what everyone was expecting, for most of the racing games that had been arriving at that time had one thing in common: a hydraulic system, similar to that of Power Drift or Chase HQ. Hard Drivin' didn't rely on this and became successful through its solid 3-D graphics, realistic gear system, and sheer addictiveness alone. Being so realistic, people loved it; even when they crashed they enjoyed seeing how spectacularly they'd smashed their car. It was a dot on the card for Hard Drivin' to be ported to the home computers, but could they possibly do it justice.

Sitting behind the wheel of the world's best sports car you must drive round one of two race tracks going through checkpoints (for extra time) until you reach the finish line and start a new lap. A choice of two different gear boxes is available, so that you can feel the realism of driving with both an automatic and manual gear stick; and when using the manual gear box you must remember to use the clutch when changing gear.

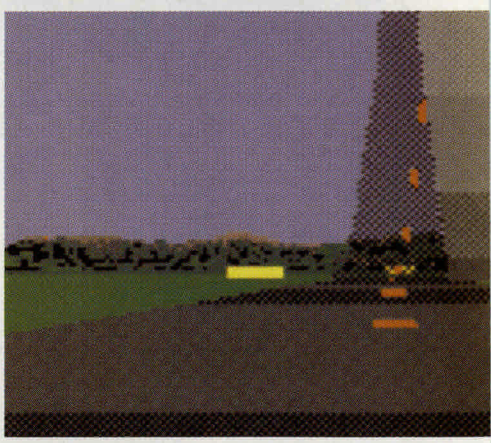
There are two different routes that you can take on the way to the finish line: the race track and the stunt track. The race track is as it sounds, having you travel mostly along straight roads getting up a good speed, but there are a few bends and although they are not that acute, trying to get round a bend while doing about 120 MPH usually ends up with you skidding all over the place. However, a skid can be rectified, and just like driving a real car if you steer into the skid you can regain control of the car and continue in the race to get to the finish line. The stunt track is a different ball game altogether. Again the main idea is to get round the track as fast as possible, but in some places certain speed limits have to be adhered to unless you want to end nose diving into the ground. There are three main obstacles that appear on the stunt track, the first one being the bridge jump; you'll have to keep an eye on the signposts for the right speed. Next is the dangerous vertical loop, and here the danger is if you



(Left & below) You'll have to be going at the right speed if you're going to land correctly on the other side of the bridge. Travelling too fast or too slow will both end with you in a rather nasty pile-up. However, there's more than one way to go on the racecourse, and the other route will take you under this tricky obstacle.



The dreaded speed bank - at high speeds you skid most of the time on this obstacle, but a good driver can keep above 100mph all the way round.



(Above & left) Putting your foot on the accelerator, you zoom up the vertical loop just avoiding some cars on the other side of the road. But you must keep your speed up if you are to make it right round the loop, because if you don't, gravity might get the better of you.

ALEX

I bet you're all thinking: "Oh no, not another racing game", but don't think that, because Hard Drivin' is not your average car game. The vector graphics of Hard Drivin' complement the game far more than sprites would have, so in that respect the game is good. The sound effects don't break any records, but are easily good enough, and the action replay makes the game different from the rest. All in all, Hard Drivin' is a competent racing game and well worth a look.

GRAPHICS

Well animated solid 3-D graphics that really bring the game to life, and the graphics still move at a good speed even though they are all solid 3-D.

75%

go too slow. Lastly is the speed bank, and this is where you need to know how to control a skid when at a high speed.

A player-verses-computer option is available where a car known as the Phantom Photon will race you around the course. However, if you beat the Phantom, in the next lap he will race in just the same style as you did in the last, so that you are effectively racing yourself, making the game slightly more challenging. The phantom can also be saved onto disk so that you can let a friend try and beat your racing skills.

STEVE

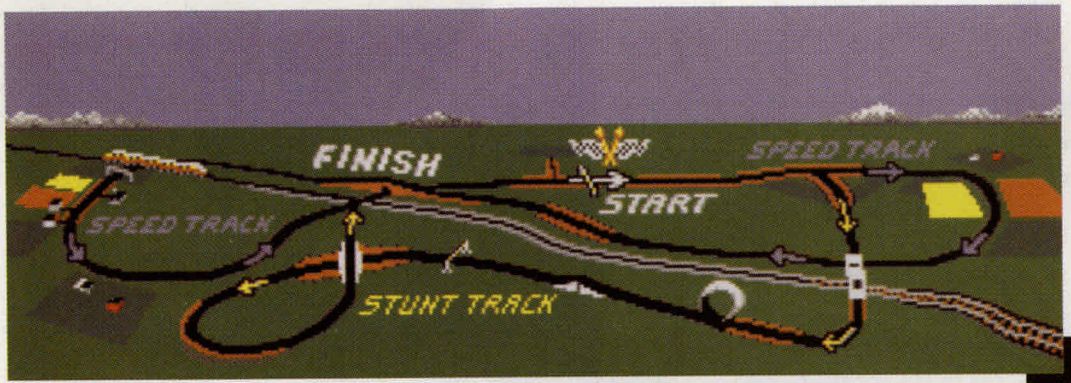
In this conversion, although they obviously couldn't supply a clutch and gear system, Domark have achieved what is probably the best conversion any Hard Drivin' fan could have asked for. The 3D graphics are updated smoothly, and all of the features that made the original coin-op so enjoyable have been retained, too. I can see a few people having trouble getting to grips with the control system, and not being used to the car handling as it would if you were really driving, and, in addition, the game's lasting appeal is dubious. These problems aren't insurmountable, though, and Hard Drivin' is a worthwhile buy.

DOUG

Porting Hard Drivin' on to the Amiga must have been a right handful, but they've managed to do it and still keep it looking graphically superb and brilliant to play. At first, the game's controls are a little bit hard to get the hang of, but you soon get used to them and can zoom all over the place. The games lack of courses might make the lasting appeal a bit low, but Domark will be releasing some extra courses later on. The perfect racing game.

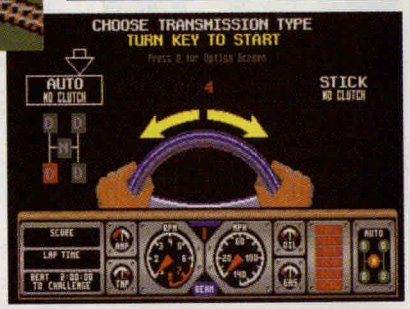
OVERALL RATING

79%

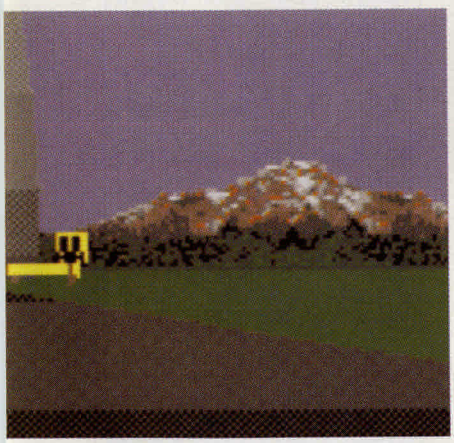


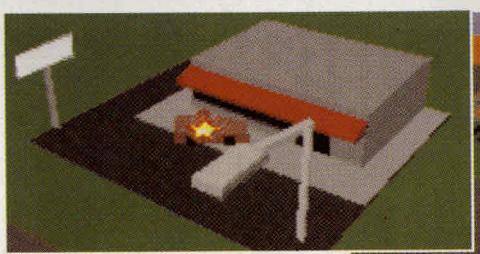
(Above) There may only be two tracks in Hard Drivin', but they'll keep you going for quite a while. There will be several new courses from Domark in the future.

(Right) Prepare yourself for the race ahead. The various cars will take both the Stunt and Race tracks, so the quicker you get past them the better.

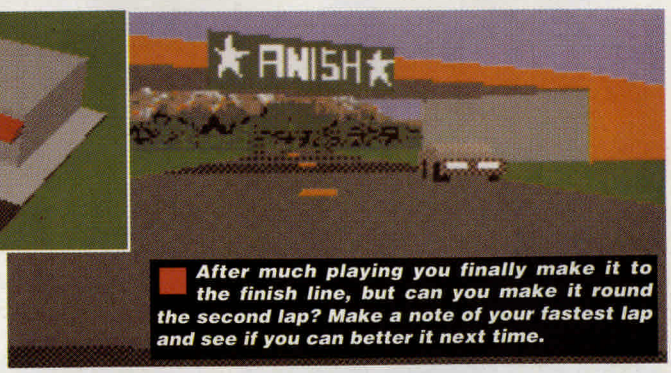


Manual or automatic? That's the question you'll be given before you start a race. Which one will you prefer? Although manual is a lot more fun, it's certainly a lot harder.

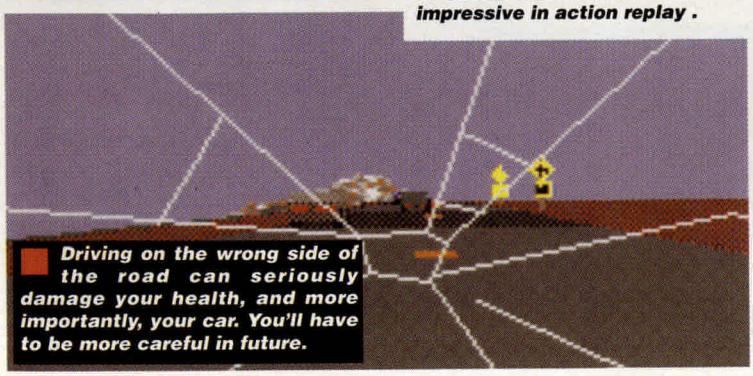




Travelling at high speeds has its risks, and this is one of them. The crash does look impressive in action replay .



After much playing you finally make it to the finish line, but can you make it round the second lap? Make a note of your fastest lap and see if you can better it next time.



Driving on the wrong side of the road can seriously damage your health, and more importantly, your car. You'll have to be more careful in future.

Once you think you're good enough, you can race the Phantom Photon, but the better you race the better he becomes. Once he's really good you can let your friend try and beat him.

ACTIVISION £24.95

SUPER WONDERBOY

Tom-Tom, the Super Wonderboy, is back, and this time he has to face and slay the extra-evil, fire-breathing dragon, Meka, before peace can once again be restored to the lovely Wonderland. Starting off on your journey with just your nappy and a simple sword for protection, you must make your way through the various kingdoms of Wonderland until, at last, you come to Meka himself. A multitude of different creatures will try to put a stop to your mission, but with the aid of your trusty sword you will be able to overcome them, and receive a reward for each minion you dispose of. Rewards usually come in the form of gold pieces, but occasionally you may get some sort of special item, and a total of six can be held at once before you either have to drop or use one.

Although gold can't be used straight away, there are a number of different shops dotted around Wonderland which you can enter and use your gold to make purchases, be they armour, weapons, or some sort of healing. A certain amount of damage can be sustained while fighting the many minions of Meka, and this is registered by five hearts in the top left corner of the screen from which when you are hit, the blood gradually drains away. Extra hearts can be picked up so that you can have a larger amount of energy, but these are very rare. Near the end of each kingdom, you will have to fight and kill an evil Guardian, who will do his utmost to put a stop to your little game. But, when killed, you are rewarded for your efforts with a large amount of gold and the key to the next kingdom.

OVERALL RATING

52%

DOUG

Super Wonder Boy is very disappointing. The controls are very stiff, and graphic detection and animation isn't exactly brilliant. But the thing that gets on your nerves the most is the loading between each stage and kingdom: it takes an eternity, and really interrupts the game. Without these the game would be brilliant.

STEVE

Somewhere along the line, probably during the porting from the ST, someone made a real hash of the Amiga Super Wonderboy. Graphically, it is as good as the ST version, but it could have done with full-screen scrolling. Similarly, the music has been butchered, too. What ruined the game for me, though, was the ridiculously long loader that interrupts the game between each stage. On the ST, there was only a brief pause before the next level started, but on the Amiga you wait longer than you would probably spend playing the level.

SOUND

Horrible blurry tune plays throughout the game, only stopping for the occasional sound effect, and there aren't many of those either.

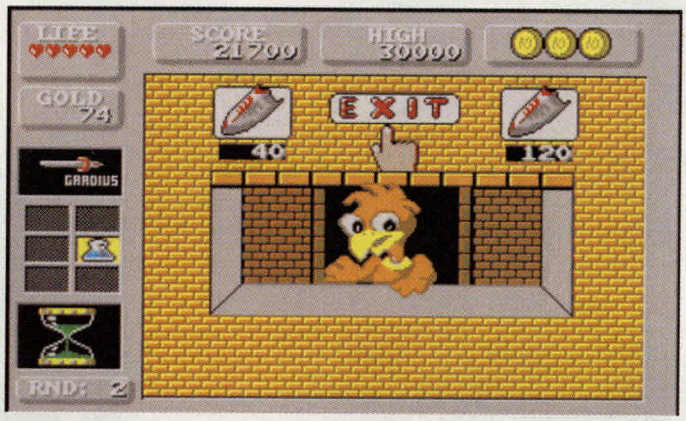
40%

GRAPHICS

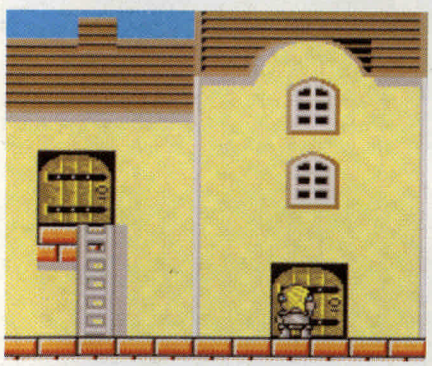
Not bad graphics, but totally let down by the sprite detection, scrolling and animation. The controls are very sluggish as well.

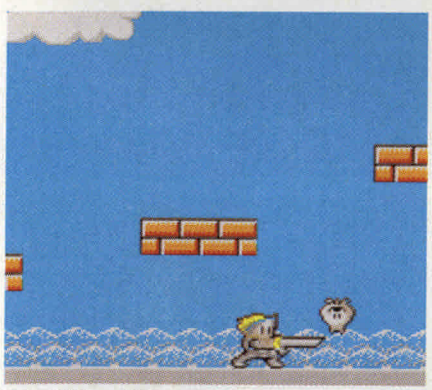
44%

Starting off on your journey with not much equipment, you pop into the local corner shop and see what gear they've got on offer, and whether you can afford it or not.



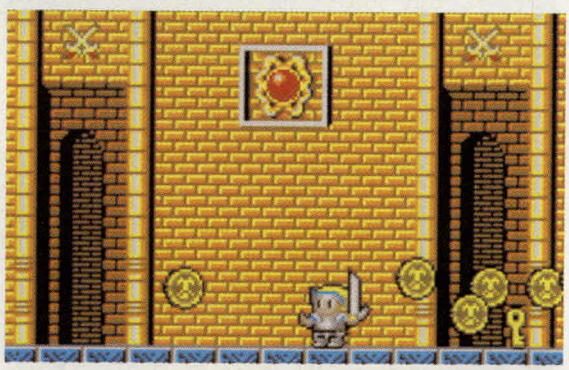
You will come across many different doors on your travels through Wonderland, and not all of them will lead to shops. With a quick rap of your knuckles, you dive inside to see what awaits within.

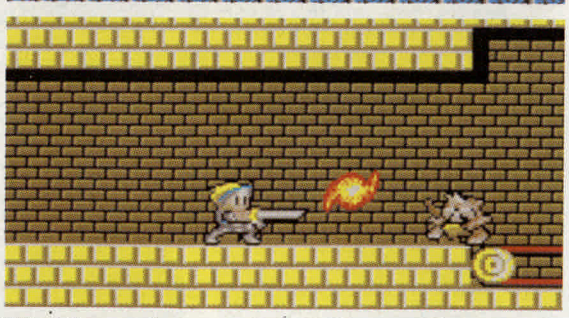




With a little run up, you jump to the next platform avoiding the water below, but sometimes a bit of sword-play will be needed before you can make the daring leap.

Near the end of the kingdom, you open a door and encounter a rather nasty looking monster, who must be stabbed repeatedly until he dies, leaving a veritable fortune in his wake.

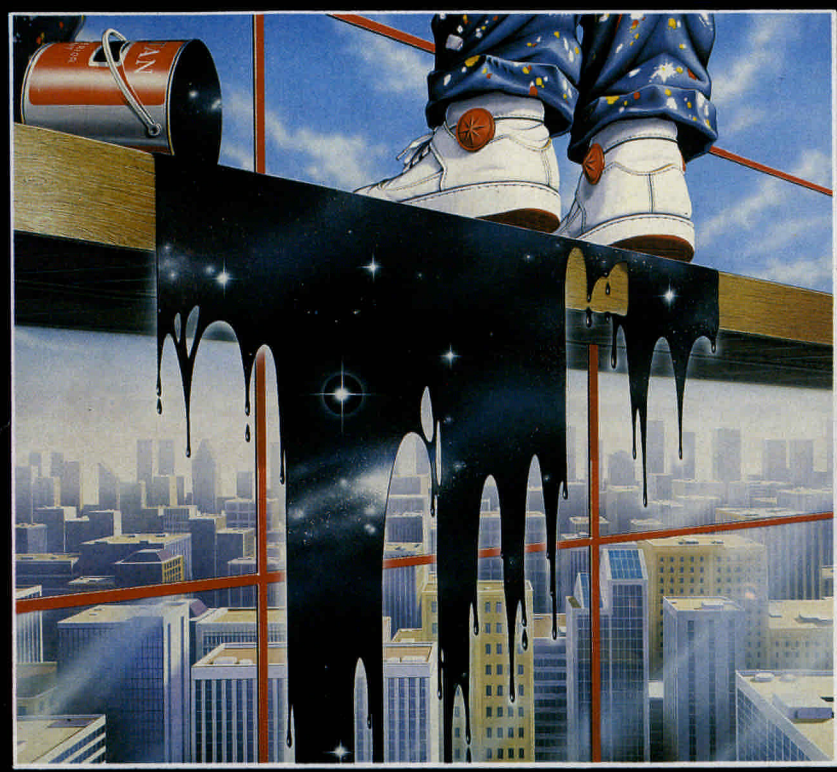




After saving up enough golden pennies, you nip into a handy shop and purchase their best monster-killing weapon. The poor old monsters didn't know what hit them.

FUTURE WARS

TIME TRAVELLERS



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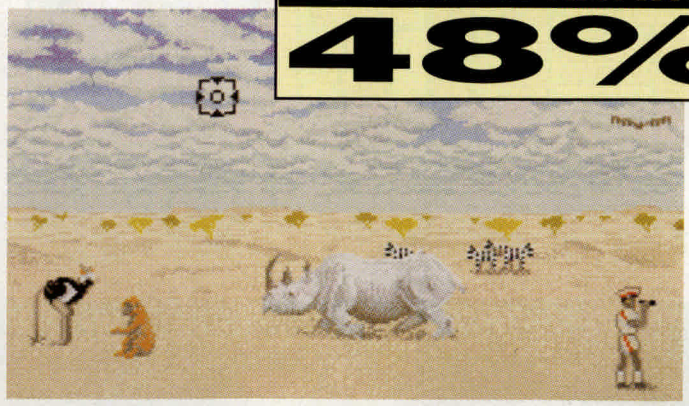
OVERALL RATING

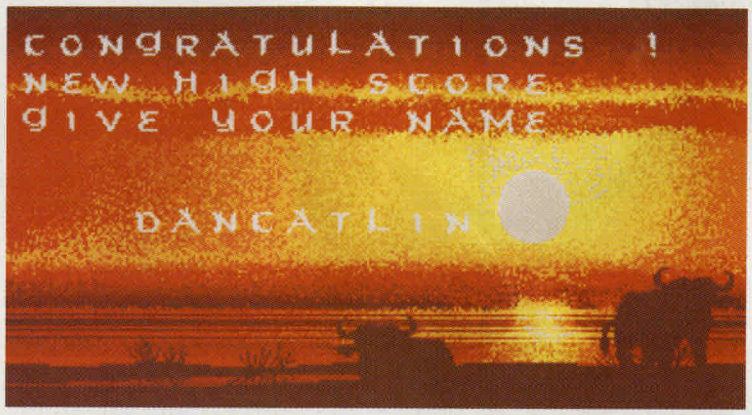
48%

The chief warden of the reserve gives you a briefing on what to expect in the wild plains of Africa, but when it comes down to it, there`s just two rules. If it`s an animal, use the camera; and if it`s a poacher, use a gun.



A whole selection of animals is ready and waiting, making your job very easy, but a good memory will be needed if you are to keep track of which animals you have already got pictures of.

At the end of the day you develop your pictures and see how much you can sell them for, but not everything goes according to plan and some of the important pictures don`t develop.



It`s not only pictures you get money for in this game. Shooting poachers will get you a reward to boost your balance, but if you happen to shoot one of the animals then you'll certainly have to empty your pockets.

INFOGRAMES £19.95

SAFARI GUNS

You are a budding photographer, making a name for yourself by taking pictures of the many kinds of endangered animals that can be found in Africa. Equipped with your camera (and a gun for any nasty encounters with poachers) you must take pictures of the various animals that you come across, and then sell them to gain enough money to go to the next location. A picture of an animal will raise you 800 pounds a time, but only if it is different from all the others; if you take more than one picture of an animal, the second picture will only sell for 400 pounds, and the third, 200 pounds; any pictures after the third will only waste the short supply of film that you have. However, it`s not that easy and although you might have taken the right amount of shots of each creature, sometimes the film will let you down and not develop properly, leaving you with yet another worthless piece of film.

Animals are not the only thing you will come across while roaming the wide expanses of bush. Wardens and natives can also be found and, although pictures of them are not worth as much as the ones of the animals, you can get a few quid for them. A large number of poachers will be encountered and, unfortunately, like you, they don`t use a camera to shoot their animals. You pose a great threat to these poachers, and on the first sight of you, you will become their target and a change to your gun will be needed if you are to escape; you can take up to five hits before you are killed, so be careful and always alert.

DOUG

When it comes down to it, Safari Guns is really just a topical shooting game where, instead of shooting anything that moves with a gun, you do exactly the same but with a camera. After a few goes the game will become very easy and getting miles into the game won`t take a lot of skill. Safari Guns is just an easy mouse-controlled shooting game that will not keep you interested for very long.

GRAPHICS

Some really nice backdrops on each of the different levels, with a lot of well-drawn animal sprites. The graphics will never win an award but they are good.

58%

SOUND

Atmospheric tribal drums play to give some feeling to the game, and a few good sound effects for things like the camera click and the gun firing. Quite good!

58%

STEVE

An Operation Wolf-style game without any violence seems an odd mixture, and the unusual setting is the highlight of Safari Guns. The mouse control was faultless as I snapped away with my camera, but having to move down to a gun icon before I could shoot a hunter was too long-winded - surely it would have made sense to have one mouse button operating the camera, whilst the other one fired the gun? Faults like this and the uninteresting gameplay make Safari Guns one to miss.

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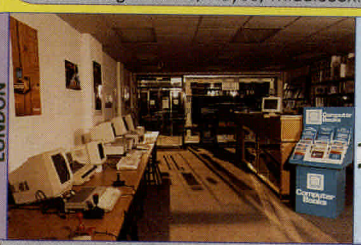

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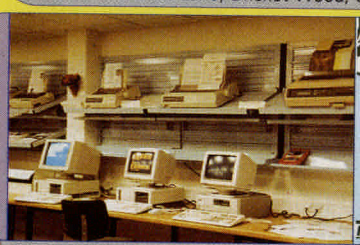

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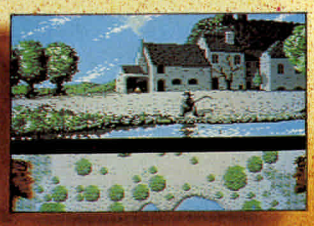
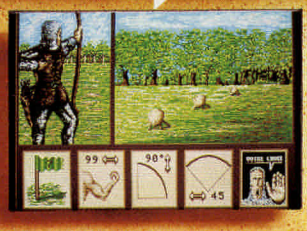


Screenshot on C 64

Screenshot on ST

Screenshot on ST



Screenshot on Amiga

Screenshot on ST

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GIVING THE GAME AWAY

Well, here we are again, and thanks to the tons of tips that have been sent in, the smaller tips are growing in number every issue. This month our amazing Ed. Steve Merrett, has ten hours of each night putting together a playing guide for the extremely hard game, Beach Volley (and yes, I've already had a lot of people writing in and telling me how wrong I was in my comment of the game, but I still think it's hard. Nyah!), while I've compiled a small guide myself for North and South. Also some good news for "Tony Petch" who had his Targhan solution printed last month: I forgot to say that you'd won a prize, and if you'd like to drop me a line saying what you would like, I'll get it straight off to you.

Sword Of Sodan - Discovery

Amazing graphics, shame about the gameplay. Quite a few of you will no doubt have had a bit of a problem actually finishing this game, so when you're in the highscore table, type in RAD and you'll gain unlimited lives, all for your disposal. Thanks to David Singh of East Ham for that little corker.

NZ Story

If you thought New Zealand Story was a cute game, then wait till you see the cheat mode. While playing the game, press DEL to reset the game, and then press M to make a laser sound. Now here comes the bit you're going to have to work out. Type in MOTHERF***ENKIWIBAS***D replacing the asterisks with the relevany letters - well, you'll just have to guess at them, won't you!), and then a lovely little tune will play to indicate that the cheat has been activated. Ta very much to N. Hughes of Reading for that, and the thousand other tips he sent.

Denaris - U.S. Gold

Thanks go to Diana Moorish from Middlesbrough for this rather playable R-Type variant. When the game asks for the second disk, press the Z key, and hold it down. Now put the mouse in the joystick port and hold down the right button until it loads. Voila! You will now be blessed with infinite lives.

Kick-Off - Anco

During many long and arduous hours of playing, Mark Doughty of Wendsbury has managed to compile a few guidelines that will make you an instant winner (hopefully). 1: If your opponent does a sliding tackle and misses, then a quick jog over his extended leg brings you a free kick nine out of ten times. 2: When running down the centre of the field, chip the ball just before the penalty area comes onto the screen and you will score a goal nearly every time; however, this should be practised to find the exact spot. 3: If you're on a lone run, without any defenders to help you, trap the ball with the keeper in sight and then let rip when he comes running towards you. 4: Run to the goal line and trap the ball just outside the six-yard box, and when the keeper runs towards, you pass the ball to a team-mate in the box and shoot into the open net. 5: On penalties, wait until the arrow is almost at the centre and then a quick tap of the joystick button scores every time. 6: The best way to score a corner is to use an inswinger. It then goes over the goalie's head and a well-positioned team-mate can score almost everytime. Finally for beginners; use the long through ball tactic, and until you've practiced leave the passing and flashy stuff to the pro's.

Dragon's Lair - Readysoft

If you've had a few problems getting past some of those tricky levels, then thanks to Mike Harris of Portsmouth here's a handy little cheat to get you right to the end of the game without having to do anything. At the beginning of the first level just hold down ESC, L, N, ,R ,7. That's it!

Super Hang-on - Activision

Continuing our "Oldies But Goldies" cheats here's some a large number of people have asked for. Once you have got the best score on either of the five continents, instaed of your name type, 750J into the high score table. It should now turn into "....", and the cheat mode is now installed. To access the cheat mode screen press the CTRL, left ALT, Z, T keys and hold them down while the screens change over. The cheat mode appears when you let go of the T key, and you will then be asked to enter the new coefficients for the turns of corners. After this your bike gains a machine gun (activated by pressing the Amiga key). Much obliged to Stephen Forshaw of Manchester for that one.

Raider - Impressions

If you were unlucky enough to purchase this poor clone of FTL's classic, Oids, then here's the whole set of codes for access to the various levels: Shot, Dyke, High, Link, Pear, Kiln, Band. The point is, do you want to bother playing past the first level.

GTGA: NORTH & SOUTH

Well, North and South might not be as boring as the TV mini series of the same name, but it certainly is a lot more addictive, and very hard to beat. So just to free you of those hours of frustration, slumped over your computer with a joystick clasped in your sweaty hands, here's a few hints and tips that have been put together just for you, and a few thousand other readers.

MOVING AROUND THE MAP

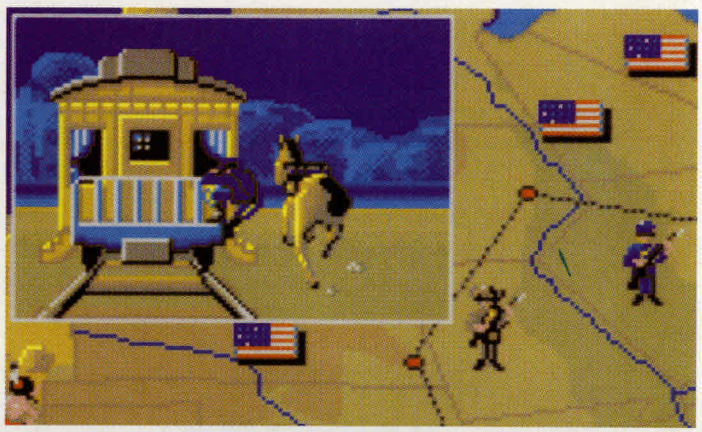
Depending on your selections on the main option screen you will start with a certain number of armies at your disposal, positioned at either the top or bottom of the screen; whichever side you choose the beginning moves of the game can be the deciding factor in whether you win or lose. With most of the land not yet owned, there is quite a selection of places to invade, but the main ones you should make for are those with the railway running through them, for then you can increase your armies regularly with the gold you make from the train's cargo.

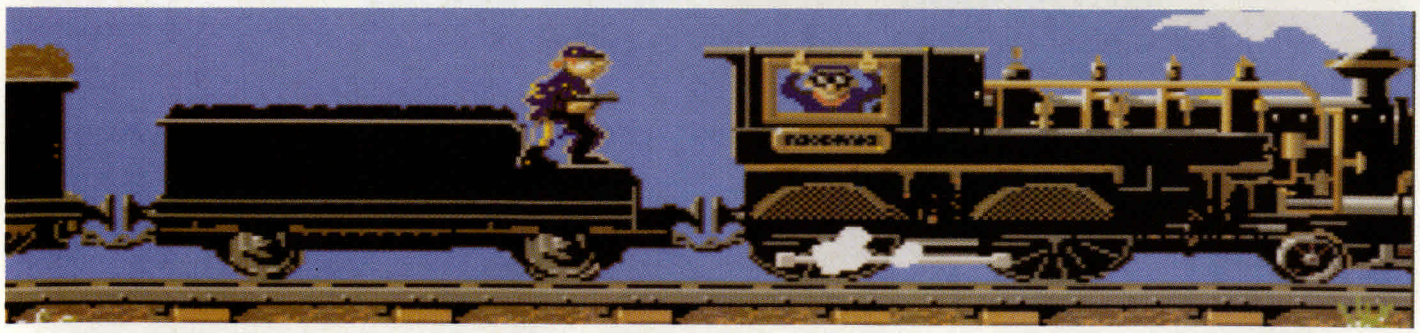
DEFENDING YOUR TRAIN

Unfortunately, two can play at this game and the opposition will not turn down a chance to raid one of your trains, but stopping them from doing so is an easy task. When the enemy soldier goes to jump from one carriage to another, bring on one of your men and throw a dagger straight away, so that when the soldier lands on the other side he will be hit and knocked backwards off the carriage and on to the floor where he will have to get back on the previous carriage, wasting valuable time and even if you miss the soldier you will still be able to rush in for the kill and let loose with a barrage of pounding fists that will hopefully accomplish what you intended in the first place, and knock him off the carriage and to the ground below, enabling your train to zoom off into the distant horizon leaving the poor bedraggled soldier to just simply hit and kick the ground in fury.

RAIDING TRANS

There are four main routes that the trains will cover, and while you might have control of one of the routes, your enemy might be raking it in on the other three. If you manage to invade and capture one of the states on the train's route from one enemy base to another, then you'll be given the chance to try and raid the train and get away with all of the goodies. Starting on the roof of one of the carriages, you will have to make your way to the right of the train, to where the engineer is and persuade him to stop the train. To get from one carriage to another you must jump across a small gap between each one, but just before you jump, let loose one of your trusty daggers so that if one of the train's guards comes on from the right of the screen he will be killed and not get in your way, thus keeping the way clear for you to stop the train and grab the gold for a quick getaway.

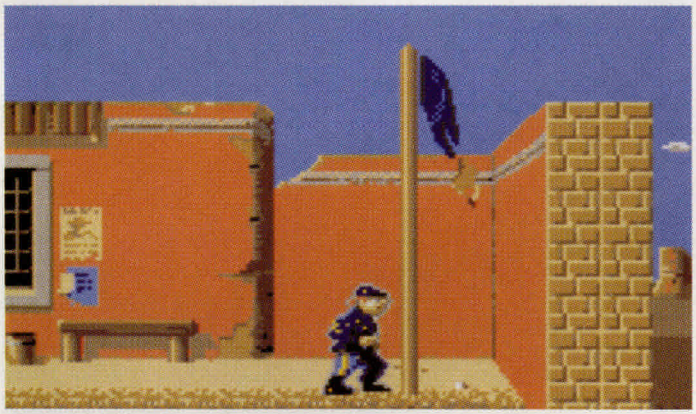




GTGA: NORTH & SOUTH

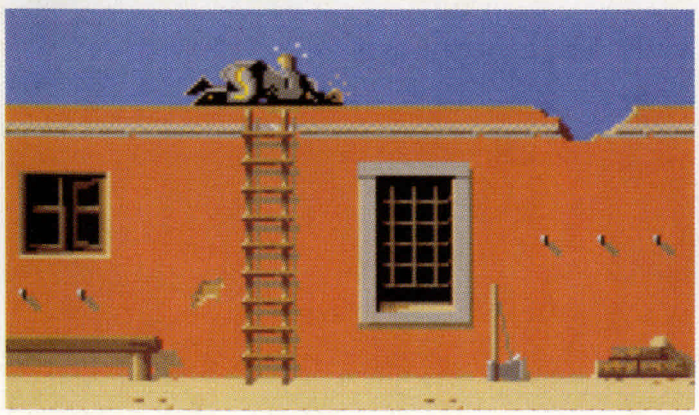
TAKING A FORTRESS

Fortresses are a good thing to have, mainly because of the trains that stop at them, giving the owner squillions of gold - but actually capturing it is another matter. Due to the speed your soldier moves at, judging jumps and ladders is very hard and until you've practised a bit you'll keep on falling down holes or running by the ladders; but once you've got the hang of it you'll be OK. Try to stay on top of the fortress's wall for as long as possible, because you won't be hassled by dogs or explosives. As soon as you see someone enter the screen, let loose with one of your daggers, and before you know it, you'll have made it to the enemy's flag, and the fortress will be yours.



DEFENDING A FORTRESS

Like the train, stopping the enemy's soldier from succeeding is very easy. You can use the same method as the train to knock him to the ground, wasting a bit of time, but it's easier just to through everything you've got at him. This way he won't stand a chance of making it to the flag in time and the fortress will remain yours.



FIELD BATTLES

No game will be won without at least two field battles, but these are probably the hardest things to win. As soon as the battle screen starts to appear, hold down the fire button so that the cannon's power meter will start to raise, and then when it gets to the top, fire the cannon, thus letting you get the first shot in, and dispense of some of the enemy's supplies (hopefully his cannon), and then if there's a bridge, shoot that as well to slow down any advancing cavalry or infantry. Although the battle is a lot easier if the enemy doesn't have a cannon, don't go out of your way to destroy it. Instead, take out all of his cavalry and infantry as soon as possible, then when the opposing side's cannon runs out of ammo and leaves the field, you will automatically win

GENERAL TIPS

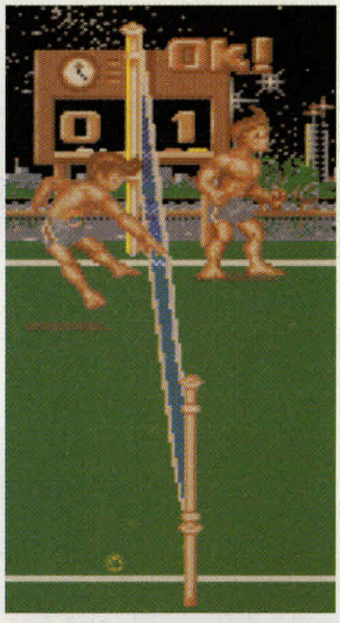
If storms are present in your game, when they get near one of your armies, simply move into them on your next go, so that when they leave that square in the same turn you won't lose your move on that army next turn. When you've got a few armies, combine them so that you have have three cannons; that way battles will be won virtually straight away. If the snoozing Mexican is positioned in the bottom left of the screen, as soon you capture Texas, vacate it on your next go and guard the surrounding states so that none of the enemy can get to it without fighting you first. Well, that's it. The rest is up to you and your talent with the faithful joystick.

GTGA: BEACH VOLLEY

This summery game proved extremely tricky to play at first, but donned in his best Hawaiian shorts and shirt, Steve 'beach bum' Merrett will show us how it's done.

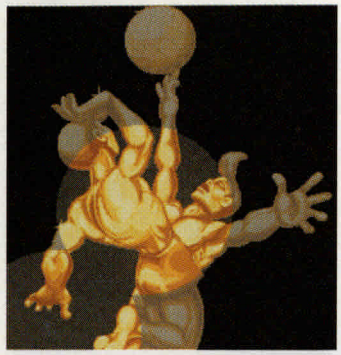
BASICS

As the old saying goes: 'practice makes perfect', and in Beach Volley this is most certainly true. The key to success is learning each team's weak points, and then monopolising them. Although there are something like a dozen countries to play in, for the most part you can use the same tactics, as the teams don't really play that differently from one location to the next. As you gain proficiency, you will notice that there are certain areas which your opponents cannot get to, and, providing you can master aiming your shots, that cup is as good as yours. Instead of attempting to beat the first team, though, play the game in two-player mode and just bang the ball around, paying particular attention to your shooting, in particular shot positioning.

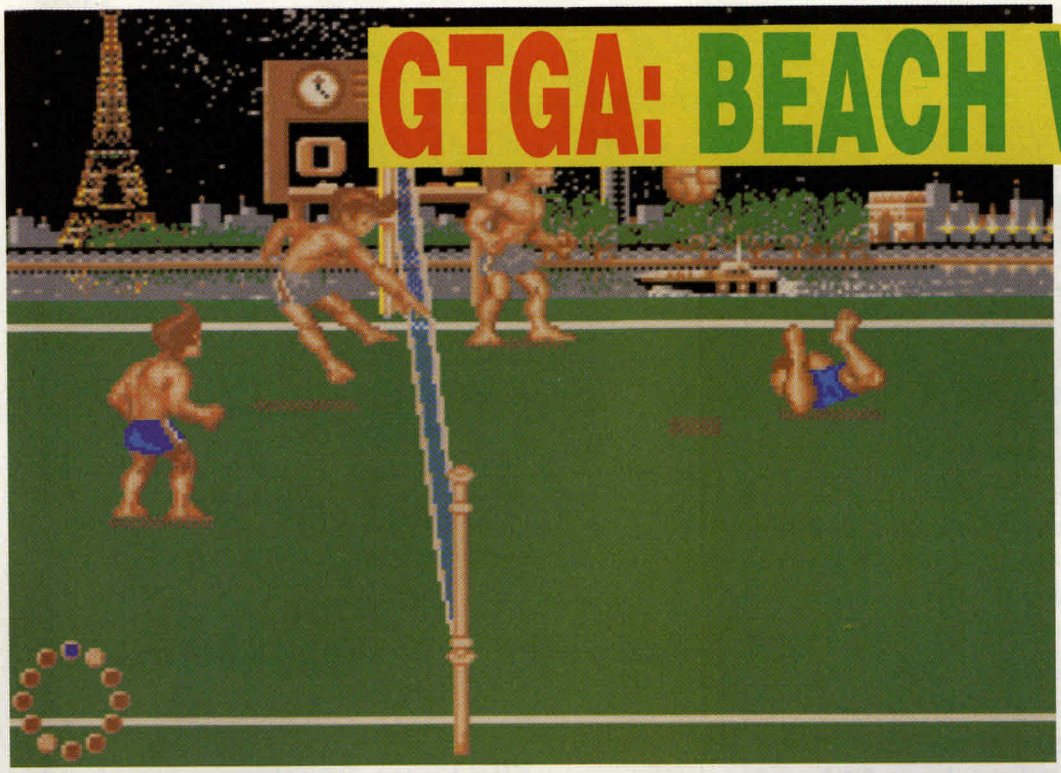


SERVING

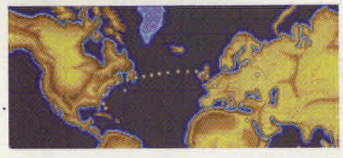
There isn't really a lot you can say about serving, as there are, as far as I can see, only two styles of shot you can perform - long and short. Press fire to throw the ball in the air, and then leap up after it. When you press fire to wallop the ball, you can decide the shot's length by either pushing the joystick to the right (to keep it short), or by holding it left for length. Of the two, long serves are probably the best, as it often catches your opponents off-guard. In addition, when serving, it is all too easy to miss the ball and concede a point - DON'T! It is tempting to leave the ball in the air until the last minute before hitting it, but don't; just concentrate on getting it over the net - the fancy stuff comes later.



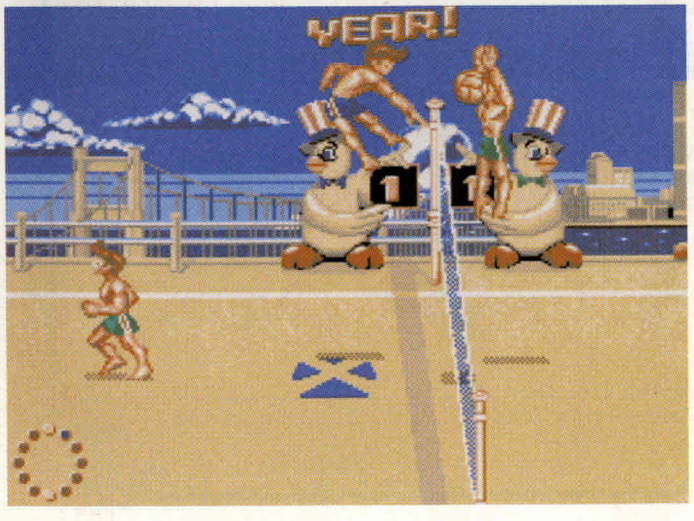
GTGA: BEACH VOLLEY



CHEAT MODE



Finally, if no matter how hard you try, you still can't beat an opponent, the programmers of the game, Ocean France, have left a cheat mode in, which allows you to skip levels at the press of a key. Mind you, we printed it a couple of months back, so you'd better have a jolly good reason for not buying that issue! Right, play the game for a while, and leave the players to their own devices and quickly type in the immortal legend DADDY BRACEY. The border surrounding the play area will then briefly flash, indicating that the cheat mode is operative. Then, when a level is proving too hard, simply press the F1 key to automatically beat your opponent, and travel to the next location and team - simple, eh!



DEFENDING

There is only one basic rule when the opponent has the ball, and that is: don't stay too close to the net. The way to defend your area, is to wait half an inch away from the net, and stay in front of the player who is due to smash the ball. When he hits the ball, instead of just hitting it back over with your palms, allowing them to try again: you'll be ready for it. This method is particularly useful, as the opposition often 'dummy' you, by pretending to smash, but just hitting it softly. However, if they do smash it, you'll be in a good position to jump up and palm it back - or, as a last and risky resort, dive to the ground to save it. Defending is every bit as important as attacking, so make sure that you have full control of your players. For some unknown reason, the second player in Beach Volley is a complete moron, who won't attempt to get the ball even if it lands next to him, so make sure the player who is at the net will be able to cover him slightly. This is especially important if the opposition break your attack.

ATTACKING

When I first started playing Beach Volley, my only retaliation to the oppositions' attacks was to palm it back so they could have another go! However, beating the opposition is really easy when you know how. When you receive the ball back, as soon as your first player has punched it in the air, position the second player so that he is near the net. The ball automatically travels to this guy, so when he is punching it up for the final smash, position your player as shown in the photo. Now, jump up to smash the ball and after you have pressed fire, push the joystick up. If all goes well, the ball will be hit straight past their defence, and land just next to the line. The positioning here is extremely important, though, and practice will be needed to stop the ball going out of play. In addition, the earlier you hit the ball, the more power you get behind your shot.

One basic rule of attacking is to hit the ball where the opposing players can't reach it. For instance, if you are hitting the ball to the top of the screen, play the ball down to the bottom quickly, and run and smash it to the back of the court! Nine times out of ten, they can't reach it, and the point will be yours, but if they do, just make sure you don't concede a point, and try again. However, never ever play the ball close to the net. There seems to be a small bug which allows the computer-controlled players to return the ball even if they aren't near it. This can be extremely annoying, and can often cost you points. In addition, the strange perspective used, tends to let them hit the ball even if it has actually gone past.

Well, that's it. Just keep practising and use the same moves against all of the teams and I guarantee you'll be lifting that trophy from the French!

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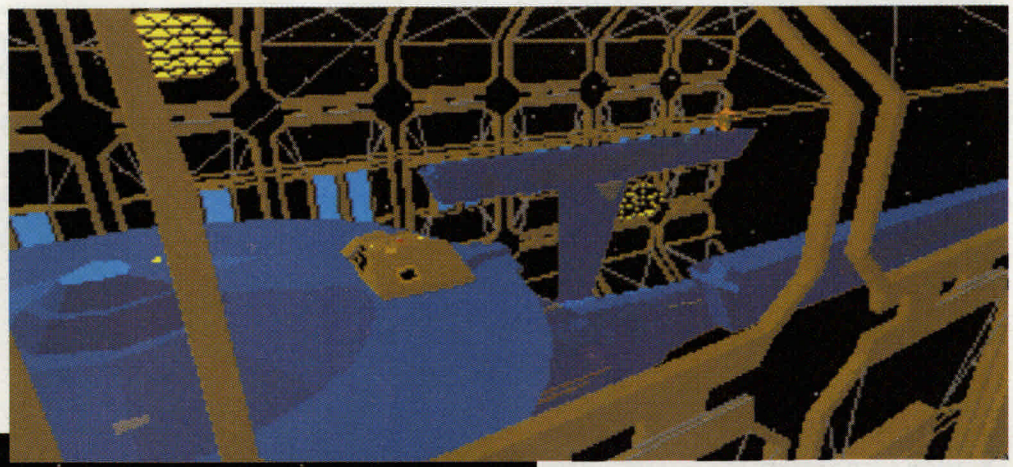
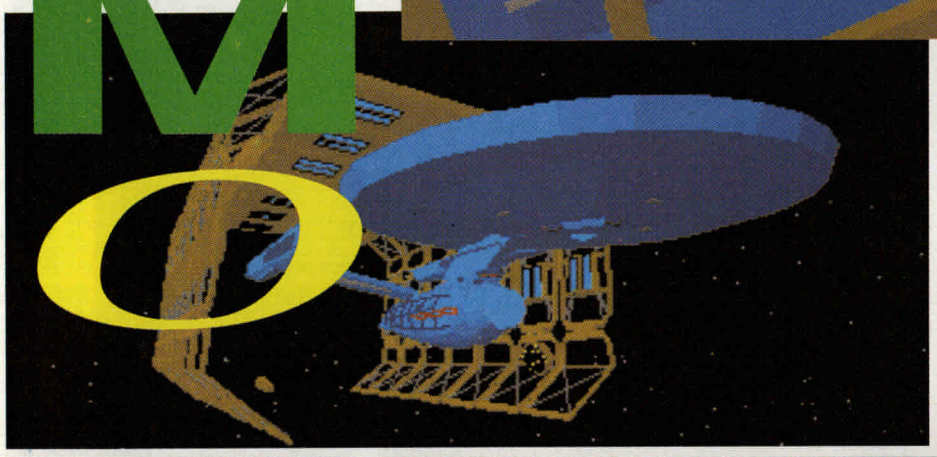
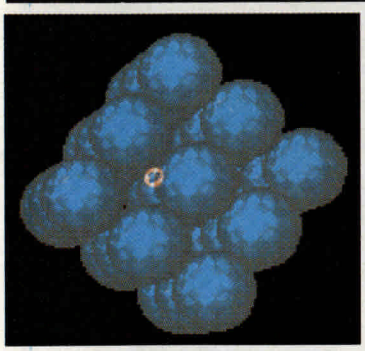
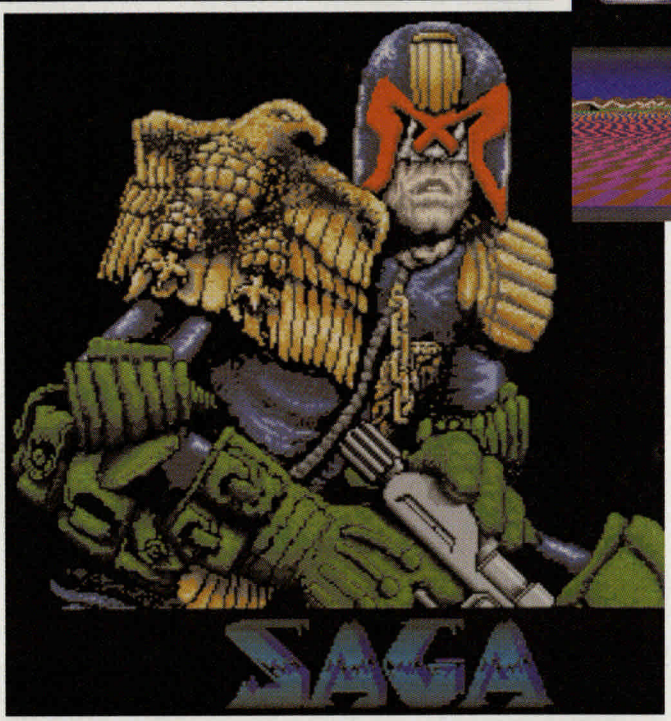




(Left & above) We begin with this very impressive Enterprise demo. Depicted in filled 3D graphics, Captain Kirk's ship pulls away from a busy space station, and launches into space. It isn't very long, but when you consider how much is going on, it's quite impressive.





(Above, below & below right) Using two disks is a selection demos from Red Sector Inc. Starting with a rip-off of the sampled speech from Blood Money, several demos are loaded, including a couple of pieces that sound a bit like Wacko Jacko's Dirty Diana, and a nice piece showing off some smoothly rotating clusters of balls - much better than the ones in Afterburner! In addition, you are treated to the picture of the skeletal guy shown here.

(Above & left) Another disk we received was Slayer's demos. Featuring the usual assortment of boring greetings and scrolly messages, the high-points were this humorous Spectrum emulator demo which loaded another demo, and a neat picture of 2000 AD's Judge Dredd, who turns round and fires at you in hjis usual happy manner. Of the three, the Spectrum demo looked really good, even going as far as to emulate the charcter set! We have seen a Commodore 64 one done on the Amiga before, but this one was a lot better.

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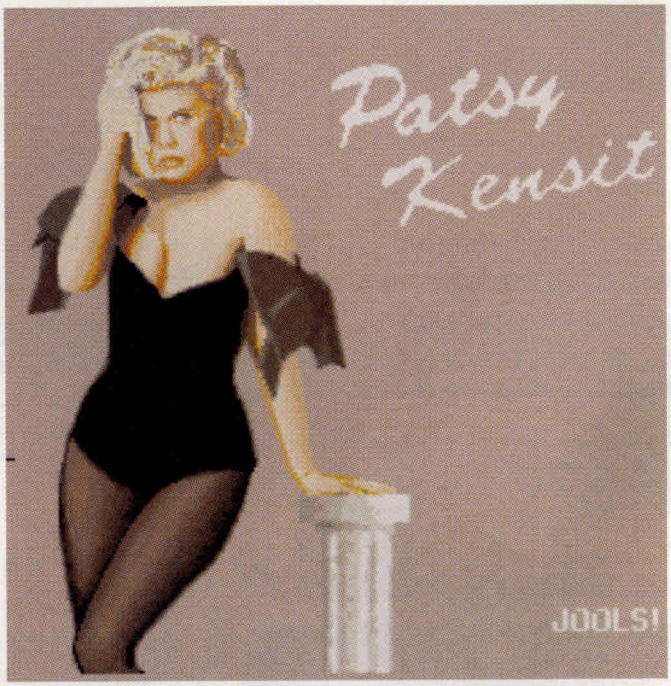
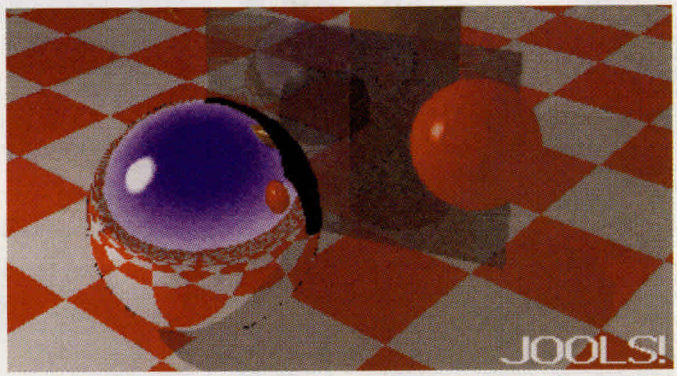
READERS GALLERY

At last. Amiga Action has its very first prize winner - Super Mario Bros by Richard Heasman. I'm sure there must be other struggling Leonardo's out there, so send your work and the name of your desired game to: Steve White, Readers Gallery, Amiga Action, Latham House, Quarry Lane, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 2NY

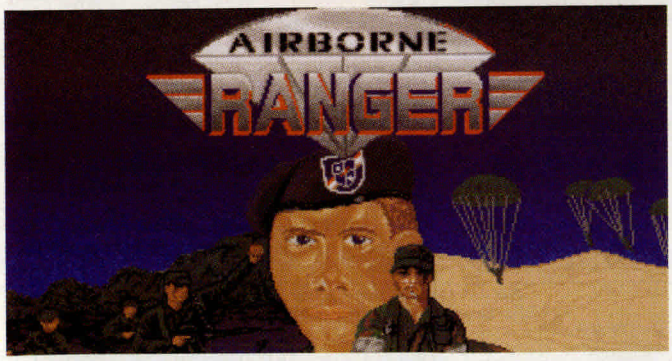
And here's the winning piccy. Richard's artwork made an appearance in issue 2 with the Amiga Action cover artwork. By the way, Richard - sorry we called you Heafman. I'm not doing too well with names at the moment, am I? (A.P.E - A.D.E)

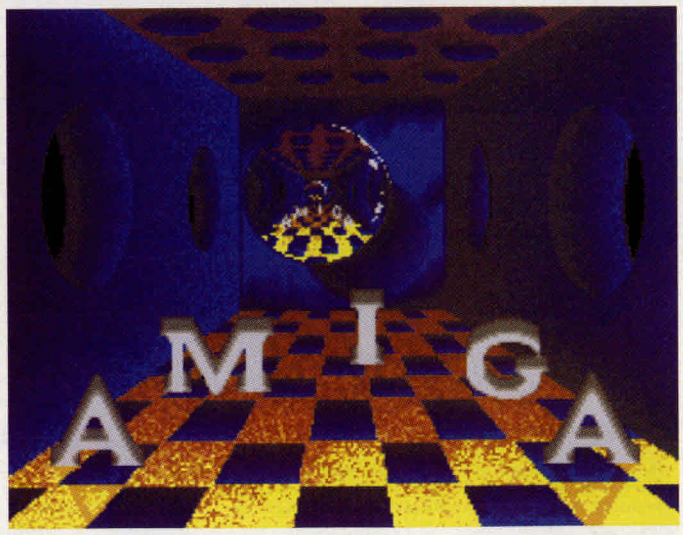


(Above, below & left) Jools tells me that poor old ADE's getting a lot of stick due to my referring to him as A.P.E, so while ADE recovers, Jools sent in some very nifty stuff himself. I think we'll be seeing quite a lot of ADE and Sooty - sorry, Jools - in the near future.



(Left, below left & below) A newcomer to the Amiga Action Gallery, H. Rai of Gravesend (I used to live there) has sent in some original and cleverly drawn samples. The Dimension picture was especially good. Keep 'em coming.





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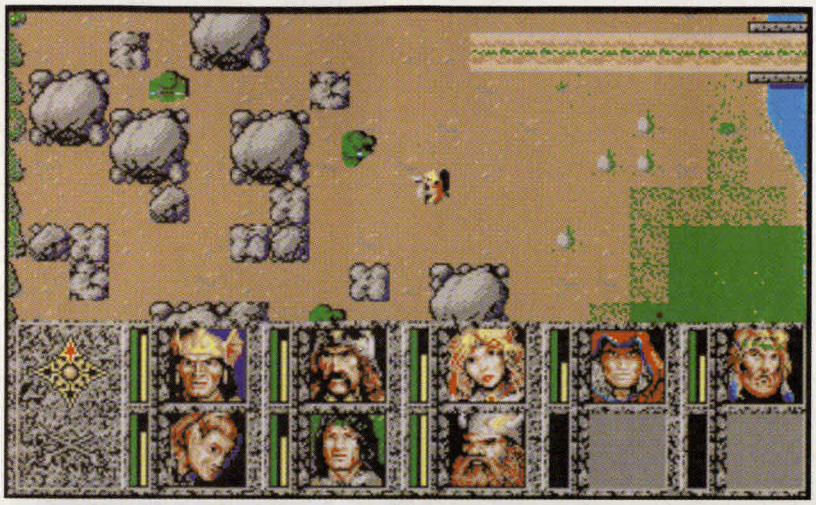
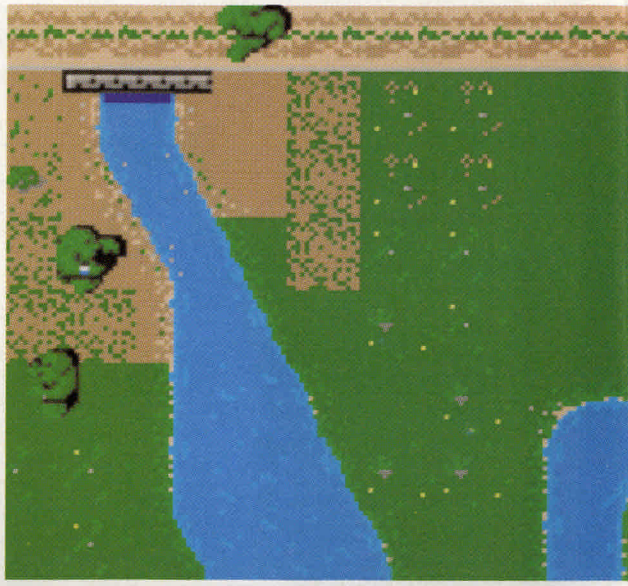
Starting just north of the fortress you quickly make your way in that direction, but before you reach it you encounter vast numbers of monsters all too eager to put an end to your quest.





SK

Being a great fan of the DragonLance books, I hoped that this game would have a longterm interest, and I'm glad to say that it will last you longer than the previous AD+D arcade adventure, Heroes of the Lance, did. There are a few extra add ons that are in Dragons of Flame - the increased map size amongst others - but all in all it's just Heroes of the Lance with a few add-ons. If you liked the first one, Dragons should appeal to you, but even if you never played this type of game before, check it out.

ANDY

Dragons of Flame is probably a very nice arcade game, but as far as RPG goes it's not the sort of thing I like. There's too much arcade involvement about the game, and it becomes very awkard in combat sequences. There's plenty of options and different things to do with the characters, but it's just so user-unfriendly. If you're looking for an RPG game, this isn't what you're really looking for

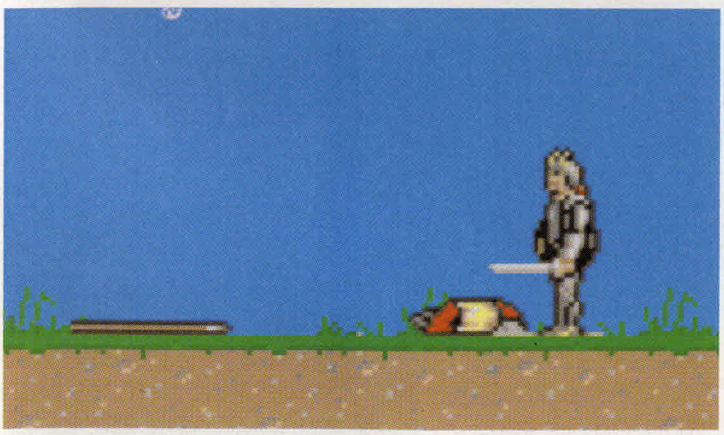
US GOLD £24.95

DRAGONS OF FLAME

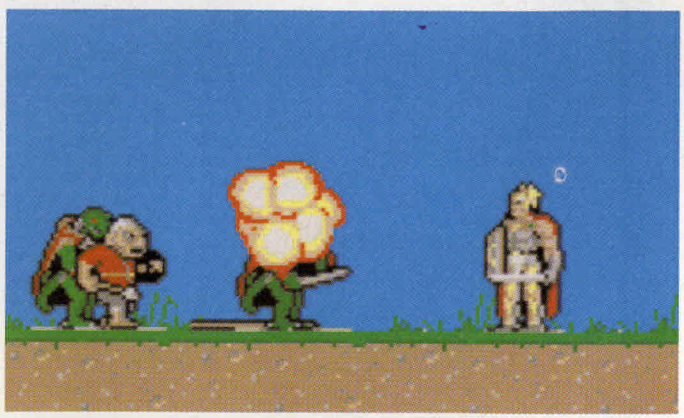
The land of Krynn faces one of its most dangerous and hostile times, and if all goes according to the plans of the Queen of Darkness, within a short time her minions, led by a small army of draconians (evil dragons raised from the dead to wreak havoc once more), will overcome and conquer the helpless people of Krynn. Once this is achieved she will come to the land of Krynn in her meterial form, from the dimension known as the Abyss, and rule over the land as her own, with her wish being the only law.

Just like its predecessor, Heroes of the Lance, you start with the same six characters all ready to do battle with the Queen of Darkness's minions, but in Dragons of Flame you can also recruit up to two more allies to help you in your quest. Moving around is a slightly different affair with you controlling your party of adventurers around a map that you look upon from a bird's-eye view. But if any people or creatures are encountered, the map is then replaced by a side-on view of your companions as they either talk or hack away at their encountered person. However, if you push the joystick up or down, your characters will change their viewpoint from north and south to east and west, thus making the combat area 3-D, so that spears that are about to be impaled into one of your adventurers don't have to be dodged by ducking or jumping over them, but by simply turning and walking out of their path of flight. Unfortunately the 3-D perspective doesn't always work and if you turn, walk a little to the right or left, and then turn back, you find yourself still in the same position.

A small selection of the more useful spells from the AD&D game have been incorporated, both of magical and clerical type and, unlike Heroes, the game doesn't totally rely on magical items for the spells. Both clerics and mages can now (after they've used up all their learned spells) rest and pray for or memorize

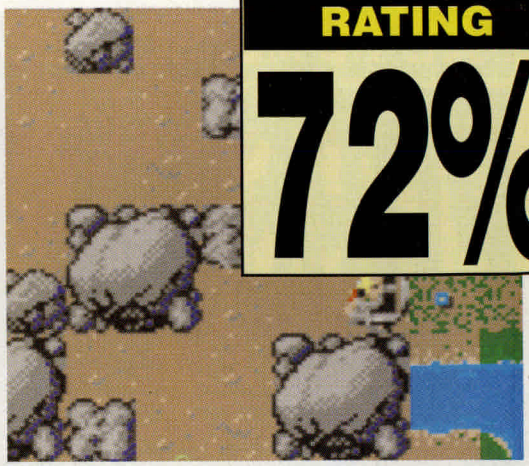


The person at the front of the party is usually the first one to go down but, luckily, owing to a slight bug in the game, you can use your cleric to bring him back to life instantly, even during a battle.



Mages are a bit on the defenceless side as far as armour goes, but when they get going they can be really mean. Before the monster knows what's happening, flames pour forth from the magic user's hands and blow them away.

(Left & below) There's quite a few different people wandering the land of Krynn, and most of them will be of some help to your quest. Once someone is met he will usually join your party and having done so he can help fight - but it's best to check out his equipment before you stick him at the front of the party.



After speaking to a passing stranger, you learn the whereabouts of some precious items and, with just a few steps, you find that the person was telling the truth. But what will that blue dot contain?

OVERALL RATING

72%

GRAPHICS

Very nice graphics in both the 2 and 3-D views. A large variety of different monsters as well as landscapes also help the game's interest to last.

67%

SOUND

Sound is mainly just a few explosions each time one of your spells finds its target, otherwise not a lot else to offer.

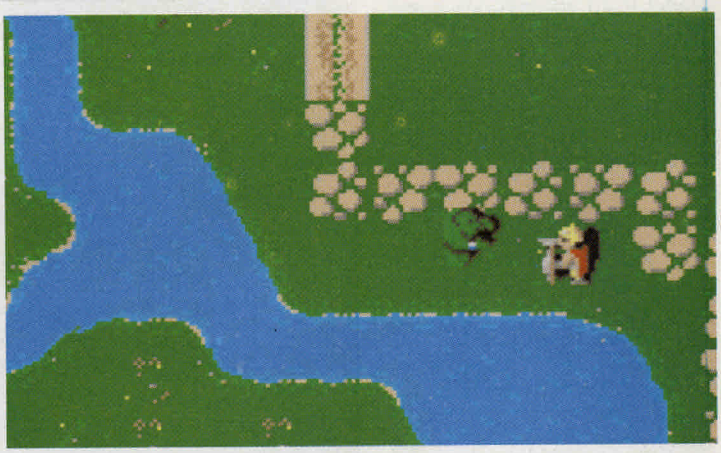
43%

DOUG

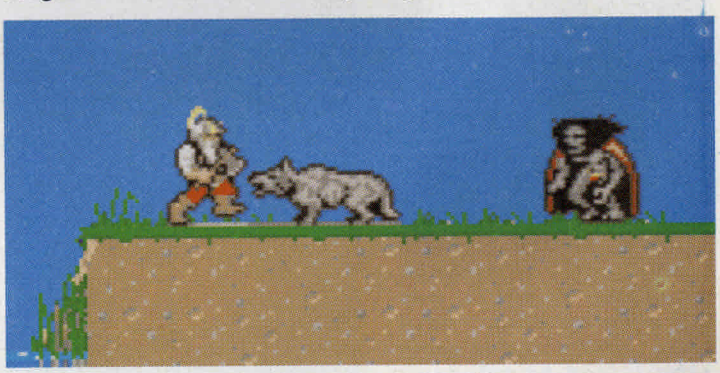
Although the gameplay is better than Heroes of the Lance, Dragons of Flame still has a large amount of arcade sequences in it. Many gamesters will say that they prefer RPGs like this on a computer, but having arcade sequences takes away the whole point of a character's stats, meaning that if yours is very powerful but you're not too good, then he's bound to die however good he is. Not a bad game, but certainly not the type of RPG I like very much.

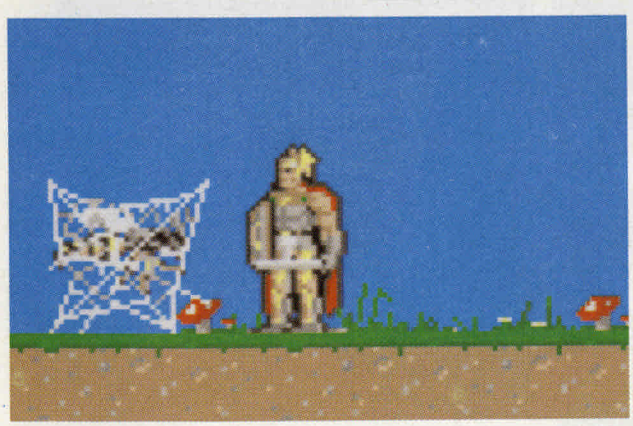
their spells, so that when the magically charged items that you are carrying do run out, you're not totally done for. Clerics can now turn undead creatures, or even kill some, in true AD&D fashion, making some fights a hell of a lot easier. If a character dies in Dragons of Flame, when you go to resurrect him, depending on his constitution he only has a certain chance of actually surviving the shock of being brought back to life, and if he is raised, his constitution is then lowered by one point so that the chance of survival will be even lower next time.

Eventually he will not survive and will remain dead forever, and when all of your characters snuff it, it's time to go back and start from scratch.



(Above & below) Try as you may, there are just too many monsters to avoid all of them, and unfortunately you have to fight at least one of them. Changing from the wilderness view to the combat view, you draw your sword and prepare for battle. The only problem is, as you fight one set of monsters, the others you just dodged in the wilderness catch up and join in the battle.





Some monsters are quite a handful and aren't worth the trouble you'll get if you try to kill them. So with a quick flick of the fingers your mage keeps them tied up for a few moments.

With several monsters in hot pursuit, you make it to a nearby river and, with a single leap, you reach the other side. Luckily, monsters don't know how to jump in this game and fall into the river never to be seen again.

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PURSUIT TO EARTH

The whole solar system is being attacked and invaded by aliens that have appeared from an unknown source in the galaxy. Work on a high-powered weapon was started straight away, but due to the new supplies of hardened titanium recently found, the base on the planet Pluto was the only place this weapon could be assembled. At last the weapon has been finished, but you now have to get it back to the planet Earth before it is totally destroyed. It will be a long journey, fraught with danger, but it must be made, the planet Earth and its inhabitants depend on it.

Leaving the planet Pluto you must guide you ship back through the various waves until you reach the mother planet Earth. Waves of alien attackers will assail you all the way and all of these hordes must be destroyed before you can continue your ever-urgent mission. At first, your ship has just a single laser, but due to the high-tech facilities available it is possible to produce more within the confines of your own star fighter. All that's needed for the equipment to be complete is special crystal that can sometimes be found floating in space. There are seven varieties of add-ons that can be made, most of them to increase your ship's fire power, but a couple to enhance your ship's ability and chance of survival. Several waves will have to be overcome on the way to each planet in the solar system between here and earth, and each time you pass a planet's orbit, the enemy forces will be waiting for you again.

DOUG

Pursuit to Earth is a rip-off of an ancient game on the C64 from about six years ago. They've stuck the now common extra weapons in but, apart from that, unlike the C64 version, if a lot of enemies appear, the game slows down, and your firepower is reduced. I can't really recommend a game that is six-years old , but for those of you who didn't play the C64 original, you might like it - but I doubt it.

GRAPHICS

Not awful, but very dated. A little bit hectic in places, and the game slows down tremendously when there's quite a bit of activity on the screen. Otherwise, they fail to impress in these days of Xenon II.

43%

SOUND

Not much sound at all, except for a few sound effects during the game which become very bland after you've been listening to them for a while.

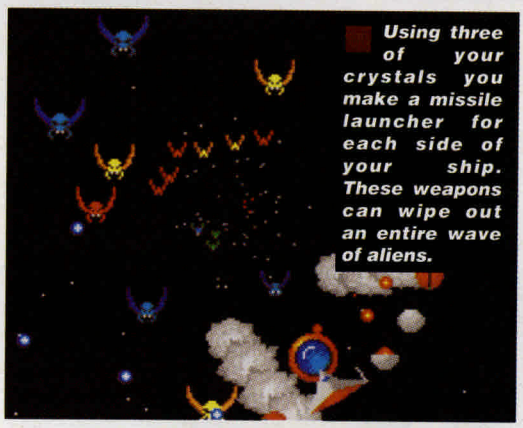
38%

OVERALL RATING

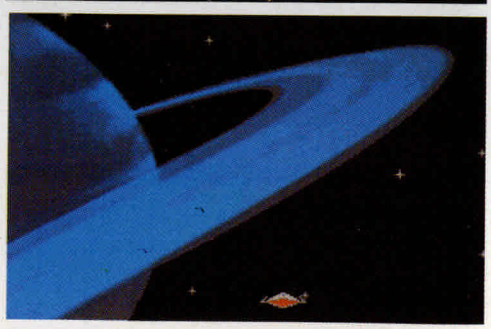
44%

As you circle the planet, you bump into a gang of nasties. All your skill will be needed here if you are to survive.

(Below) Collecting as many crystals as possible you kit your ship out with a whole armament of weapons. Remember to keep them out of the way of bullets.



Using three of your crystals you make a missile launcher for each side of your ship. These weapons can wipe out an entire wave of aliens.



At last you make it to the next planet and circle it once for luck. Apparently these digitised shots were taken from the pictures taken by Voyager.

Even the best pilot couldn't get out of that scrape. With a trail of smoke you zoom off into the distance and explode. With another one down you now only have one ship left.

STEVE

Playing Pursuit To Earth gave me a strange feeling of deja-vu. It was like going back about five years and playing the latest 64 release - complete with uninspiring graphics and repetitive gameplay. Likewise, it also has a number of annoying faults I thought I would never see again, including the awful 'wait a minute or two every time you lose a life' trick - most annoying when you just want to start playing again. There's nothing good I can really say about Pursuit to Earth. It seems playable for a while, but that soon wears off, and the game gets extremely boring.

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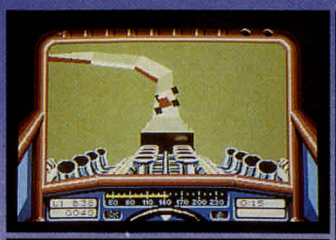

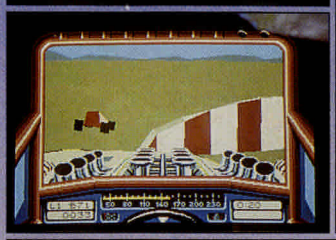

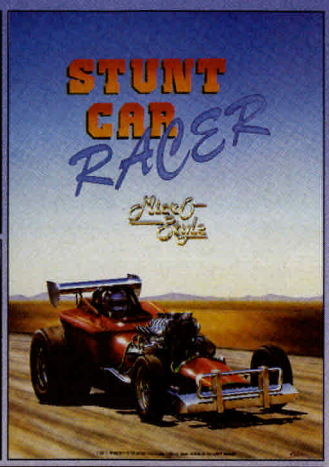

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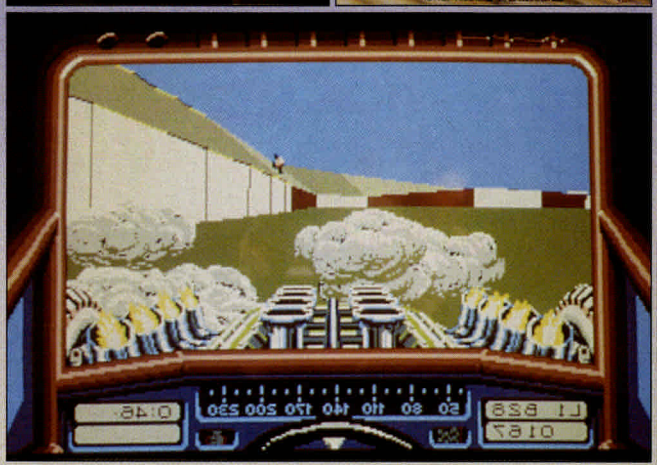

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NINJA WARRIORS

By the year 1993, Earth was a shattered planet. The four years before this fateful year had seen the rise of a criminal mastermind known only as Bangler, who, as his wealth grew, bought his way to the top of the world's hierarchy. Anyone who opposed Bangler died; it was as simple as that. Whereas in the tradition of world history, Earth had been ruled by several leaders, Bangler had had them all assassinated by his newly-bought police and armies, and immediately seized control over their land, crushing anyone who opposed his rule. One faction who did oppose his rule, however, were a group of English revolutionaries under the control of President Mulk, one of the few leaders to survive Bangler's indiscriminate killings. Realising Earth's people were too weak and too scared to rise up and attack Bangler's hidden base, he set his few remaining technicians the task of designing a team of two fighting droids who could be sent to infiltrate Bangler's lair and kill the evil tyrant. After several month's work, and the deaths of even more of Mulk's followers, the two robots were ready, and duly sent to save the Earth.

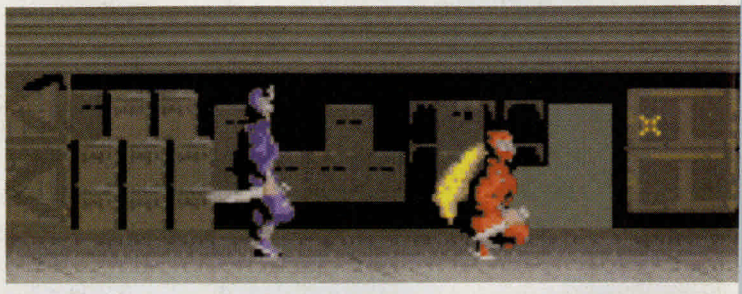
Ninja Warriors is a conversion of the relatively successful Tecmo coin-op, and has been converted to the Amiga for Virgin by Random Access, the team behind the conversion of Silkworm. Converting the coin-op was going to be far from easy right from the start, as the original arcade machine featured a three-screen cabinet, with both you and the enemy freely walking between each monitor. To combat this problem, though, they have reduced the size of the graphics and added more sprites, and this makes the screen seem slightly bigger than it usually does. In addition, they have also incorporated a special loader within the game that loads sections of the game as you are playing. This then eliminates the boring loads that you normally get between levels, and allows you to continue playing uninterrupted.

Controlling one of Mulk's fighting droids, it is up to you - and a blue-clad robotic companion in the two-player game - to make your way through the six stages that comprise Bangler's hideaway. To help you in your task, you are armed with numerous ninja fighting skills, including a number of somersaults and leaps, along with two long-blade swords and a limited supply of throwing stars, and with these, you must kill any of the corrupt police and army forces that oppose you. Each of the stages is a long horizontally-scrolling level, and as you walk towards your ultimate goal, numerous soldiers, policemen and other deadly opponents will attack you, reducing your strength with every successful hit. You are given four credits with which to make your way to Bangler, but these are eaten up rapidly every time your energy is fully depleted or if a second player opts to help you.

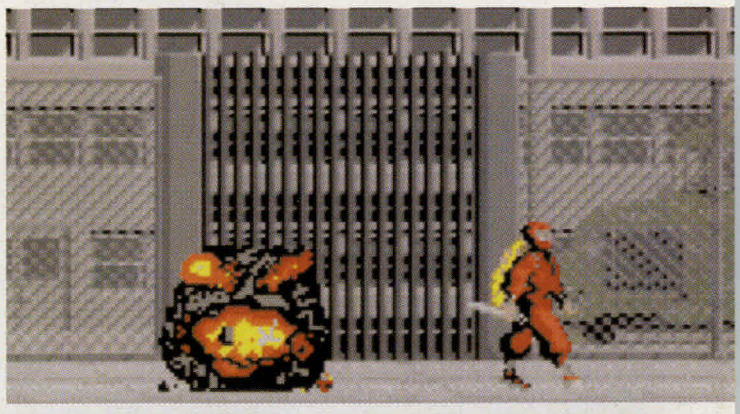
ALEX

Ninja Warriors is another in a long line of beat 'em-ups, but I think that it is one of the better ones, with good audio effects and well drawn graphics, with the attention to detail being particularly good. The game's difficulty is set at the right level as well, being hard enough to keep you coming back for more but still easy enough so that you can progress everytime you play it. Overall, Ninja Warriors has been well converted and if you are looking for a better than average beat 'em-up, have a look at Ninja Warriors, you could do far worse.

An energy bar below the main playing area dictates how long your ninja will remain in operation. Every time he is hit, whether it is by a bullet or a larger weapon, his energy is reduced, and his overall appearance suffers.



As well as his swords, your ninja carries a limited number of throwing stars, and these can be thrown at the approaching attackers by use of the firebutton.

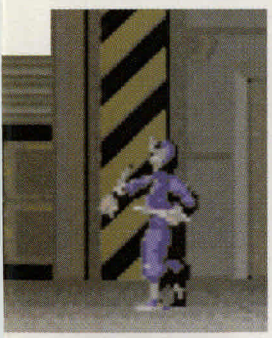


For the most part, your assailants will be knife-wielding grunts who aren't particularly dangerous. To combat them, somersault over them and, as they turn around, trying to get their bearings, cut their throats!

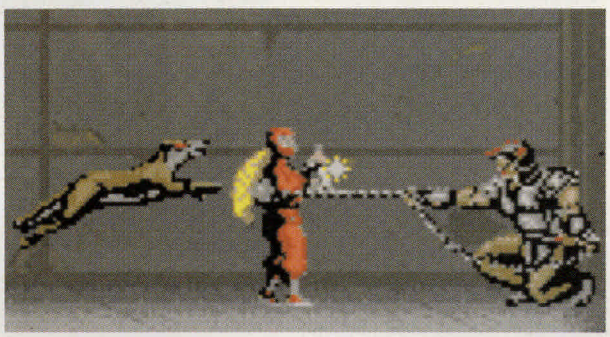
OVERALL RATING

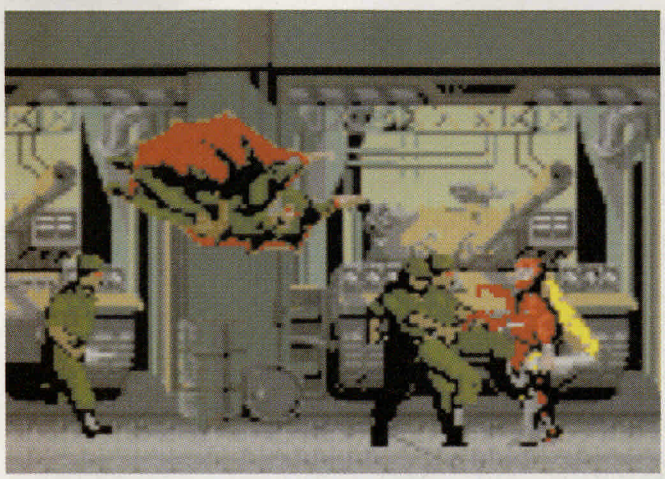
77%

By pulling the joystick down and pressing fire, the robot can protect himself against enemy bullets by crossing his swords into a small shield.



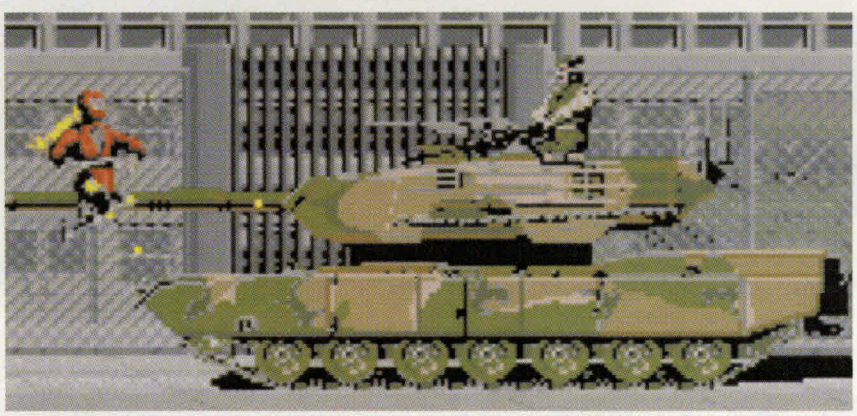
Twice within each level, you will encounter a guardian who must be hit several times before he finally stays down. These guardians range from a ghostly warrior, to a chain-wielding punk who saps your energy with one swing of his massive weapon.

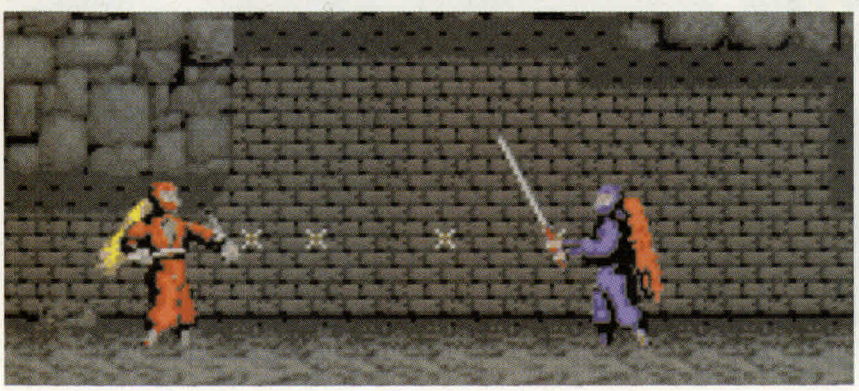




If things are getting tricky, you can somersault out of the enemy's way. However, do this too often, and a cluster of deadly squirrels(!) will attack you. Likewise, if you spend too long defending yourself, a pack of hungry dogs will leap at you.

(Left & right) On levels two and four, a large tank attempts to kill you. Suddenly, the ground where you were just standing is blown up by an unseen gun. Shortly after, a tank appears, and must have its machine gun-toting driver killed before you can pass.





Each of the six stages sees you progressing through Bangler's lair. To begin with you start in a slum just outside his base, but before long, you make your way through the sewers until you finally enter his domain.

STEVE

Warriors may be just another in the long line of beat'em-ups, but in terms of polish and - to an extent - playability, it is one of the best. Both your main character and the many enemy are all a little on the small side, but they move well, and feature some very realistic animation. In addition, the sound is also up to a very high standard. Several crystal-clear samples are used, ranging from shouted orders to the whimper of a kicked dog, and they really add something to the game. You may find that the gameplay gets repetitive after a while, but Ninja Warriors is a polished and well-presented beat'em-up.

DOUG

Converting this from the three-screen arcade version couldn't have been any easy task, but they've managed it, and done a pretty good job in the process. The game gets a little bit repetitive in places, but when you come up against things like the tank with its amazing sound effects you just have to keep on going. Everything from the arcade has been included and I've heard there's even a bit more.

GRAPHICS

The small but detailed sprites are nicely animated, and are set against a wealth of similarly well-drawn backdrops. The colours are a little pale, but on the whole they give the required effect.

69%

SOUND

Brilliant. As you chop your way through the hordes, dogs wimper and growl, men scream, and female ninjas shriek.

87%

ACTIVISION £24.99

GHOSTBUSTERS II

Five years later, and nothing more has happened to raise any major interest. But one day, while Dana is out at the shops with her baby Oscar, he is suddenly pushed into the middle of the street by something that cannot be seen. This is where the Ghostbusters come in.

The first of three levels has you descending into an old airshaft leading down into an underground railroad, from where you hope to get a sample of some ghoulish slime. As you lower yourself into the shaft you will be attacked by various ghosts, all trying to knock you from your rope into the depths below. There are three weapons that can be used to foil these nasties: the Proton beam (as used in the first game) that can destroy most of the ghosts that attack you; the PKR bomb to destroy hands that try to saw through your cable; and the PKR shield to protect you from just about anything. Three parts of a retractable scoop must be collected as you go down the shaft to enable you to collect the slime when you actually reach the bottom.

The next level has you controlling the Statue of Liberty walking through the streets of New York, making her way to the museum that has been taken over by Vigo. Using the statue's torch you can destroy the oncoming nasties, and then send out the New York citizens to collect the slime that is left.

The last scene sees you inside the museum. After abseiling in through the skylight, you must retrieve Dana's kidnapped baby, Oscar, and then send Vigo and his minions back to the ghostly world they have come from. But how you do that is up to you to find out.

STEVE

Despite all the hype, I'm afraid that Ghostbusters comes as a bit of a let-down. It's slickly presented, with a superb rendition of the famous tune, and the graphics are attractive and superbly drawn - especially the shading - it's just the game that lets it down. Of the three stages, the second one was my favourite - not because it was particularly good, but because it lasted longer than the others. A pity really because if there were a few more levels, Ghostbusters II would be a brilliant licence; as it stands, there just isn't enough there.

GRAPHICS

Each level features superb graphics, with good use of shading being used. And the overall effect is pleasing.

60%

SOUND

The game opens with a superb rendition of 'that' tune, and the ingame effects are more than adequate.

83%

DOUG

Ghostbusters II looks and sounds really good, but this superb presentation is let down by a dull game There are only three levels within the game, and although you have to work out what to do on the last level, it's still very easy. I'd beaten the game by my fifth go, and once you've beaten it there's just no addictiveness left. Nice game, shame it's so short and easy.

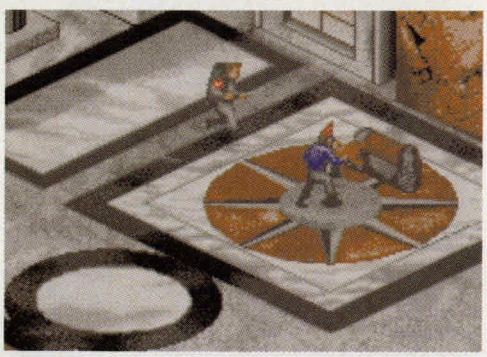
OVERALL RATING

65%

Making your way down the airshaft, you come across various handy objects. But the ones you really need are the three parts of the retractable scoop.

At last you make it to the bottom of the shaft, and see the slime that you need to collect a sample of. Let's just hope you've still got some of those PKR shields left.

Filling the Statue of Liberty with slime, you make your way towards the museum where Oscar is being held prisoner. As you kill the various ghosts, send out people to collect the slime for the statue.



Once inside the museum you start to look for Dana's baby - but the baby isn't the only thing in the museum. Vigo's minion runs round blasting you and returning the baby back to his boss whenever you take him.

Your problems never cease. Even when Vigo's gone, one of the ghostbusters is taken over and tries to kill the others. What on earth can you do now?

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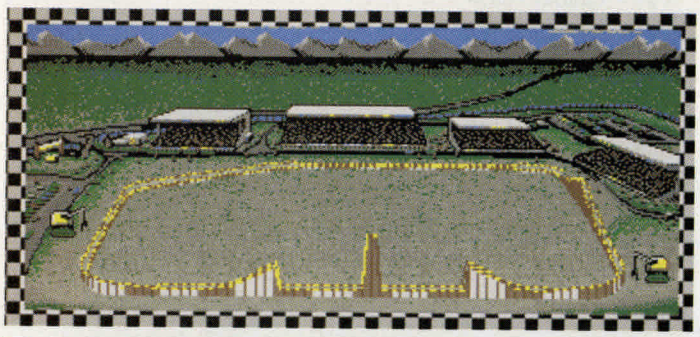
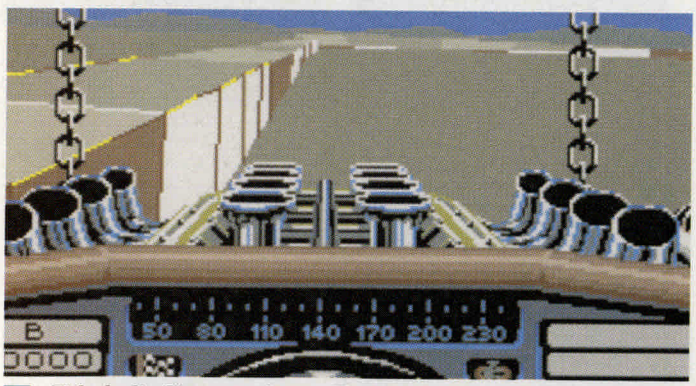
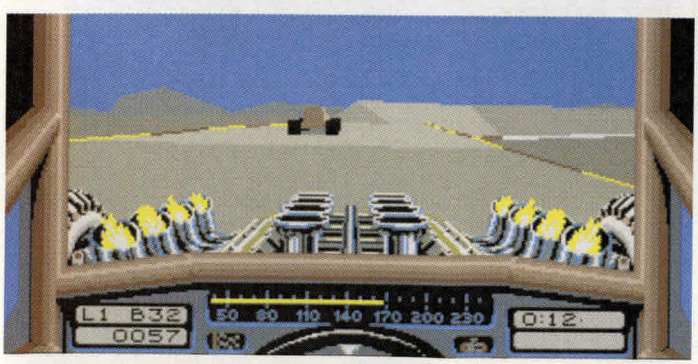
These are the drivers that are present in your division. As you win races you will gain promotion and be shifted up the ratings.



Before you start the race you will be shown a 3D representation of the actual track. Using the firebutton you can view the course from all directions.



This is it. The race is on. Your stunt car is hoisted onto the track by the crane. When the chains are released, turn on those turbo boosts.



There he is. Get him! It's possible to actually ram the car off the track; but beware: I often found myself flying off when in the process of trying to knock my opponent off.

MICROSTYLE £24.99

STUNT CAR RACER

A stunt man, as you all probably know, performs those dangerous feats of bravery that mere mortals, such as ourselves, wouldn't even dare think about. So, here's your chance to gain first-hand experience of what driving a stunt car racer is really like. Obviously, the car has been altered somewhat, with extremely efficient brakes, extra absorbent suspension and a highly tuned engine. There are four divisions, each with two different tracks, to race your vehicle around. You can either decide to practise each course or start the racing season, where you will be competing against some of the best drivers in the world. Once your decision is made, you're ready to race.

You will be treated to a sneak preview of the track that you will be presently competing on. Just look at all those lovely humps and gaping chasms. You'll realise now why your car resembles a dragster. Both cars are lowered

STEVE

Although it doesn't look up to much, Stunt Car Racer is a very deceptive game. If you have a friend, you have just got to link two Amigas together, and witness sheer playability in the head-to-head - we did, and lost a day's work! However, even if you don't possess a friend or a second Amiga, the computer-controlled car is a brilliant competitor, and can get really mean in the higher divisions. Forget fancy graphics and sound, buy Stunt Car and witness sheer playability in motion.

WHITEY

What can one say? Stunt Car Racer is brilliant. The game is so realistic that I found myself leaning into every corner and yelling obscenities at Steve, who accordingly yelled back. The Amiga-to-Amiga link option is excellent and great fun to play. But for those of you without a spare Amiga, Stunt Car Racer is a worthy buy in my books. The update is fast and smooth and sound has been well catered for. Well done Geoff 'Sentinel' Crammond.

AMIGA ACTION

OVERALL RATING

80%

See what I mean? Take the corners too fast and your car will shoot off the edge. You'll be treated to a 3D view of you and your car plummeting to the earth.

SOUND

From the scraping of the chassis to the crunch of your car hitting the track, sound has been used extensively and effectively.

70%

GRAPHICS

The programmers have created the effect of intense speed perfectly. The track undulates realistically and has been created in perfect 3D. Graphically, there is nothing to fault.

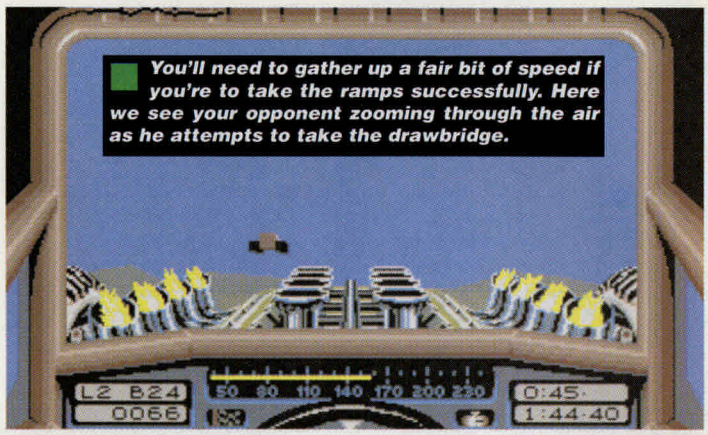
72%

onto the starting line of the track by the loading-crane. As soon as the hoist chains release, hit that accelerator and burn rubber. You begin the race with a set amount of boosts, that can be switched on and off by pressing and releasing the joystick firebutton respectively, but remember: you only have a limited supply, so it is best to use them on the most crucial moments of the race - when overtaking for example. The track itself is represented in perfect 3D, and twists and turns all over the place, just as if you were on a rollercoaster. This makes control of your car extremely tricky and you may occasionally find yourself whizzing off the track. Should you stray off the edge you will be repositioned back on the track by your crane. Every bump and skid damages your stunt car. Damage is indicated by cracks appearing in the border of the main display area. Reach the next race and the cracks will all disappear. A hole indicates permanent damage and these will be with you until your car is totally written off. Should too much structural damage be sustained, your car will become a total wreck and you will lose. There are three laps to complete and you will be given a lap time and a point score at the end of each race.

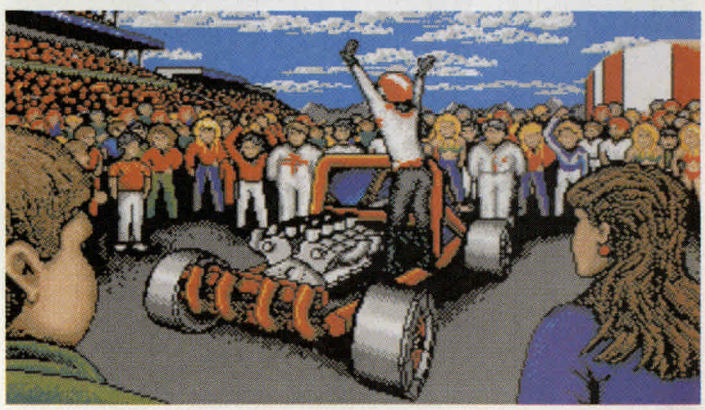
All the information you will require is indicated on the dash of your stunt car. There is a separation indicator, which displays the distance between you and the other racer, as well as the usual stopwatch, speedometer and lap indicator. As well as a save/load game position, Stunt Car Racer also has the option to link two Amigas so that two players can race each other. This facility makes the game even more exciting - especially when you bump your opponent off the road.

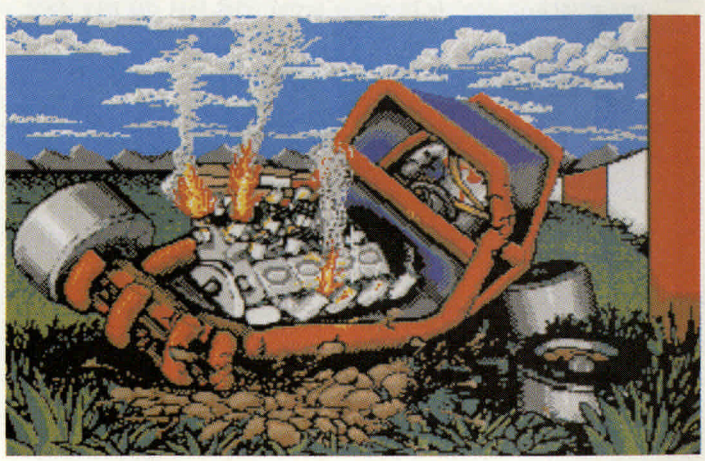
DOUG

There`s not much variety of graphics, and the sound isn`t amazing, but the gameplay is great. We linked up two of our Amigas in the office for a head-to-head and had the most fun we have had for ages. The game is still a lot of fun with one player verses the computer, but it might become a bit boring after a while. If you know someone who has an Amiga you can link up to, Stunt Car Racers is a must.



You'll need to gather up a fair bit of speed if you're to take the ramps successfully. Here we see your opponent zooming through the air as he attempts to take the drawbridge.





(Above & below) Hoorah! While one of you revels in the sheer euphoria of fame and fortune, the other driver slumps into his worn-out stunt car - resigned to failure. Don't worry, there's always the next race.

SK

This game is very 'Dungeon and Dragonish', your character has the same type of abilities and you have to build them up as you progress through the game. The graphics are well done and the music is OK, although it does get boring after an hour or two. The game also has touches of humour which I liked. I didn't like the way in which it killed you off so easily. Even choosing the correct way to defuse a trap can cause your untimely demise, just because you didn't have enough experience for the job.

ANDY

While you initially struggle to understand the ground rules, your character will die very quickly, very often. Once your abilities grow, likewise will your interest level. The sparse sound should have been used to enliven the combat sequences, which are nothing to get excited about. The gameplay has no wonderfully novel features but it has enough quality packed into it to warrant it being well to the fore of any RPG player's wishlist. A worthwhile game which will certainly make you feel that you got something for your money.

ELECTRONIC ARTS £24.99

KEEF THE THIEF

Lock up your gold and set your mantraps. Keef the Thief is here to nick anything valuable that's not nailed down.

Welcome to Same Mercon's Bazaar where almost anything in the kingdom can be bought and sold. Perhaps you'd like to buy a spiked club to squash the hairy-scaries in the nearby forest, or a jar of herbs to create a healing spell. Don't worry if your gold-purse is a little light, you can always improve your thieving skills by just nicking what you fancy. Remember to keep an eye out for the roving guards, or they might cut short your career as a thief.

In the town's alehouses the cups runneth over - and that's just the barmaids! Cross the correct palm with gold and you could pick up information which will send you ploughing through the surrounding forests seeking fabled treasure.

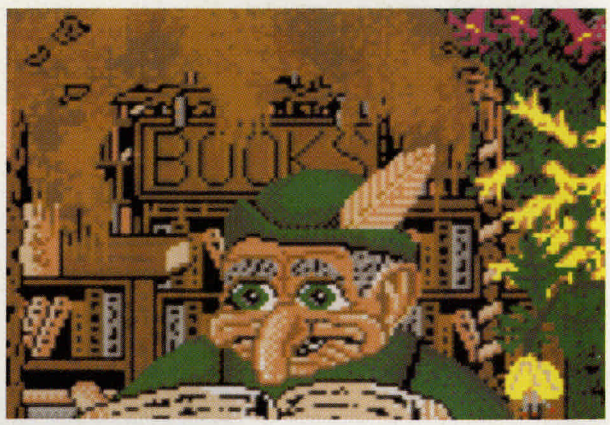
Starting out as an amateur thief you must quickly acquire some weapons and the corresponding skills to use them. Thoughtfully, the townsfolk have left their homes unlocked, giving you the opportunity to stick your ill-trained mitt into the first mantrap available. Maybe it would be more advisable to steal a weapon from the armoury and build up your skills by fighting with the ill-assorted monsters outside the town gate. Thumping this rabble of 'Drool Fiends' and 'Killer Chickens' will gain you enough gold to return to the city where you can purchase the maps and spell-books necessary to seek out new cities and new quests.

Set in a middle-earth scenario, the authors have given the game a humorous slant by creating silly monsters and sillier spells. The light spell is a Flickus Bickus (shades of Monty Python's Biggus Dickus) and then there are the healing spells such as Bandus Aidus. Your road to success involves fighting other characters and acquiring their wealth, or entering homes, dismantling traps and stealing the goodies. Rare paintings by the great artists Porsche and BMW can fetch a good price in the market place.

The game uses mouse and menu to make decisions, while on-screen indicators show your current Health, Food, Sleep etc. Your hero's abilities to fight, steal, charm and generally 'rook' the populace, increase with each successive bad deed. There are weapons and armour to be

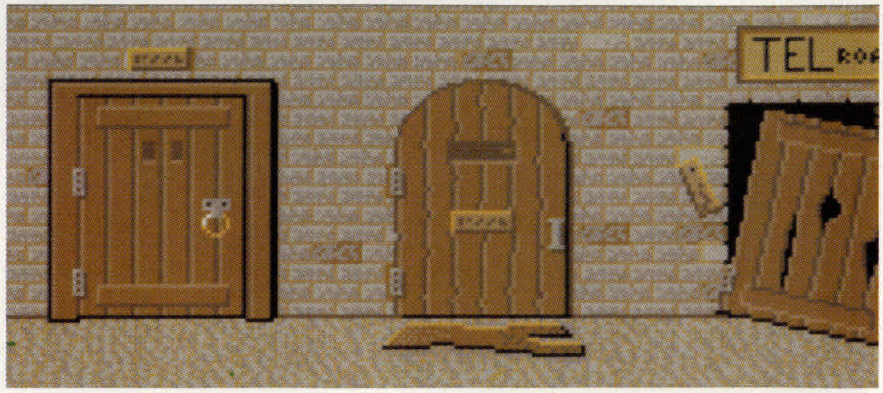
The OPEN GATE to the city. It's known as the OPEN gate because it is never locked. Mainly because some idiot lost the key right after it was built.

A trip to the Herb Shop will enable you to buy some useful items to create spells which kill and cure.



(Below) By the look of these front doors you would be doing the occupiers a favour by robbing them. They'd at least clean up on the insurance money.

Our hero takes stock of the weapons available in the armoury. Don't worry if they cost too much - just nick them.



SOUND

There are a number of up-beat tunes played throughout the game. I suspect that you will soon turn them off as they do nothing but irritate eventually. Sound effects are virtually nil.

68%

GRAPHICS TEXT

The main screenshots are cartoonish and pretty good. The portrayal of the monsters in the combat sequences are adequate, but hardly innovative. Overall, not spectacular, but not unpleasing.

73%

OVERALL RATING

74%

acquired, spells to be learnt and lands to be explored. Talking to other characters generally costs gold (no loose talk here), but perhaps the smutty innuendos from the brick-built wenches in the taverns are worth it!

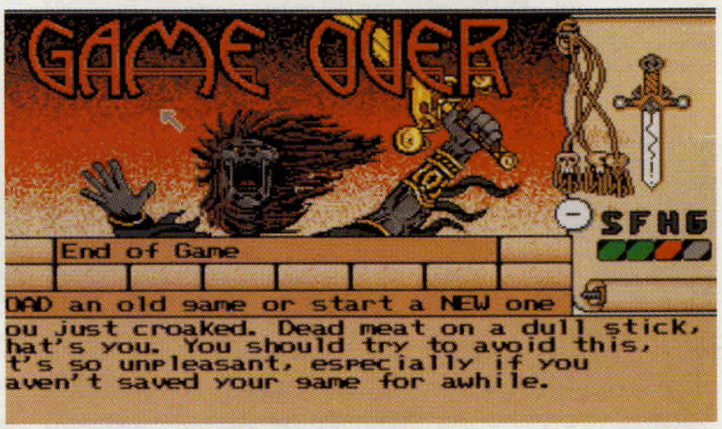
The screen displays static pictures of your surroundings with a menu of your current options. If you buy a jungle map you can select a bird's-eye view of the forest and head for the intriguing locations shown in the distance.

Scrolls can be acquired which will suggest the likely mixtures of herbs and 'yucky' substances that might combine to form magical spells. Should you enter a combat situation, a slot-shaped battle screen is displayed showing your forward view, along with a tactical window to locate the enemy. Success in battle consist of pinpointing an isolated foe, charging in his direction and putting the knife in before he can take a swipe at you. With a little practice you will soon rise quickly in the fighting lists and be able to hold your own with the larger foe which wait further afield.

DOUG

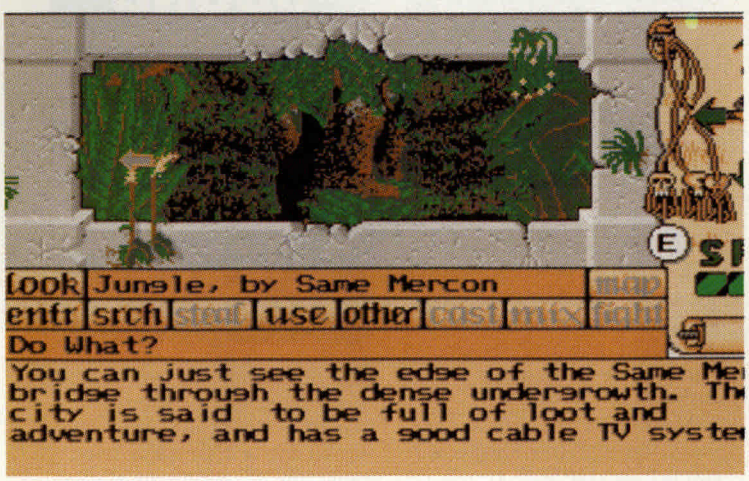
The thing I enjoyed most about Keef the Thief was the unusual setting - it certainly makes a change from the usual boring adventure game scenarios. That said, as well as this novelty, there is a good game lurking there as well, meaning that, even when you stop laughing at the settings and humour, there is still a game to go back to. Keef is heartily recommended.

"Hubble, bubble, toil and trouble." With magical ingredients spread out before you on your bearskin, you're ready to mix up a potion and fuse it in the Spell Flame. Make sure you get the right combination or you're likely to end up in a heck of a mess!

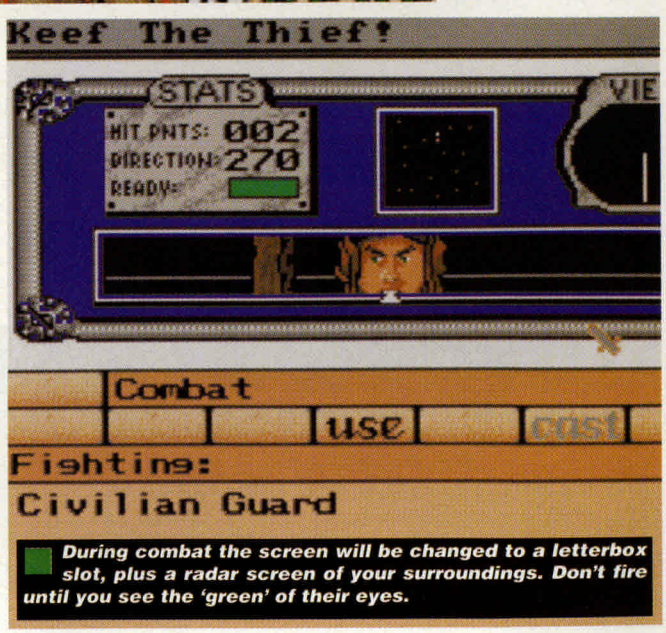


(Above) Game Over again. You're dead meat on a stick once more. Death comes rather quickly in this sudden death game. Man-traps and city guards give no second chances to apprentice thiefs.

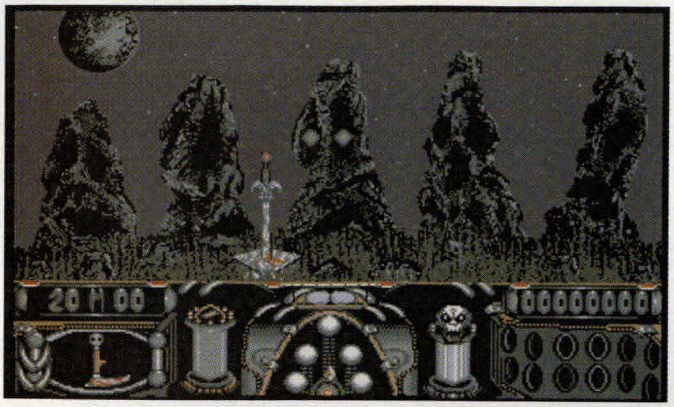
The Drunken Dragon Pub is just the place to get some interesting 'tit-bits'. Then again, you could just ask the barmaid for information!



It's a long way to anywhere in this monster-infested jungle if you try to go far without first obtaining a map.



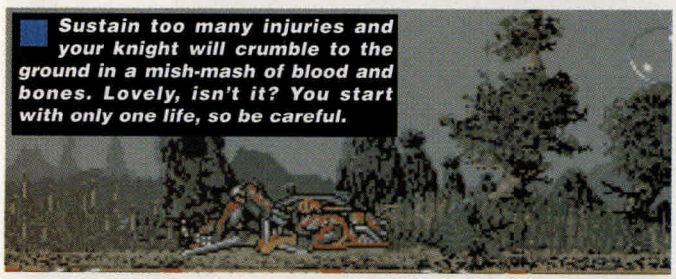
During combat the screen will be changed to a letterbox slot, plus a radar screen of your surroundings. Don't fire until you see the 'green' of their eyes.



(Left) The Knight of Thunder, although suited in black armour, stands for good and honour. He must travel around the time zones destroying the sorcerer's clones.

Although the knight is armed only with a sword, he can also avoid danger by leaping. His leaping skills become apparent when great chasms must be crossed.

Everything seems quiet and tranquil, yet everything is a danger to the knight. Zombie's hands maul at the knight's feet, while cavemen wander around aimlessly, armed with axes.



Sustain too many injuries and your knight will crumble to the ground in a mish-mash of blood and bones. Lovely, isn't it? You start with only one life, so be careful.

The enemy that you will encounter include skeletons. Jab those bones with your trusty sword. They must be hit several times before they die.

OVERALL RATING

57%

TITUS £19.95

KNIGHT FORCE

Time travel would seem impossible even by today's standards, but thousands of years ago on Earth, Helias - master of the Kingdom of Belloth - had the power to use it. Helias was appointed by the godsto guard the nation and all paths of time. But Helias was getting old, and so he decided to appoint a successor in case he should die. This successor was known as the Knight of Thunder, who was respected and honoured by the pacifist people of the kingdom, as was Helias. But great power attracts those who wish to abuse it and turn it towards evil. Eventually, king Helias did eventually die and the Knight of Thunder became master and keeper of Belloth. No sooner had he settled into his new position when the beautiful princess Tanya was seized by the evil sorcerer, Red-Sabbath. His plan was devious, and extremely cunning. The Knight of Thunder would come to rescue the princess. Red-Sabbath would then kill him and steal the key to the gates of time and space. Unfortunately for the knight, Red-Sabbath created clones of himself and placed them in time.

You, as the knight, must travel through the different time zones while collecting the magic amulets of power. Each amulet can only be used within a pre-determined time zone. The history of Earth is full of war and violence and the knight will encounter various types of enemy on his travels. The sorcerer has cloned himself five times and each time you destroy one of them the princess is placed in a different time zone. Armed only with his trusty sword, the Knight of Thunder must save the princess and the Kingdom of Belloth.

DOUG

With its stilted animation, dull graphics and repetitive gameplay, Knight Force leaves a lot to be desired. The task behind the game is quite interesting, but the presentation and gameplay let it down. The knight's chinking armour sounds as if it's a galloping horse, and in some parts the gameplay is very frustrating. I've seen worse, but that still doesn't make this a good game.

WHITEY

Although visually and sonically pleasing, Knight Force just did not appeal to me. Playing the game was a little frustrating due to the responses of the character and the awkward system of fighting the enemy. Knight Force is, basically, an average beat'em-up but with a new plot, which isn't exactly original. There are far too many games of this ilk and Knight Force really doesn't add anything new to the genre.

GRAPHICS

The different time zones have been well simulated and designed. Animation on the main character is also very good although there is a lack of originality on the enemy.

55%

SOUND

The Knight of Thunder 'clunks' about the play area in a very pleasing way. Maybe the armour sounds are a little over the top and sound like explosions at times. Not bad, though.

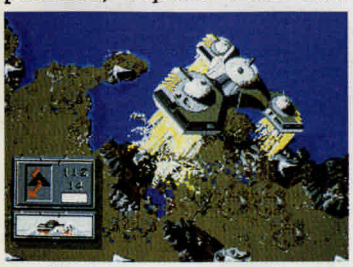
48%

HAVE YOU THE RIGHT STUFF TO BE A FULL METAL PILOT ?

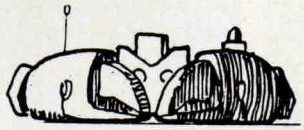
FULL METAL PLANETE. 8:54 am. You will have to prove that you are the Cobra Steel Company's best pilot...
Your mission : land your spaceship, get a maximum load of ore, disintegrate or get hold of the precious equipment of the rival companies and, if possible, capture their own spaceship bursting with ore. Under your command a whole steel armada : barges, attack boats, tanks (amongst them the famous T99 known as the "Big Heap"), transporter crabs and the unique "Weather Hen". This extraordinary machine, the technological pride and joy of Ludodelirium Motors & Co., is able to transform the ore into material. Not only that, it also foresses the changing tides. On Full Metal Planete ignoring the rising tide means foolhardiness. How easily your attack boats could get stuck or your tanks flooded in the next turn !

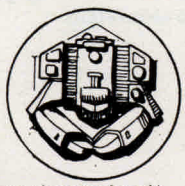
In a previous campaign, this attack boat got stranded on a reef ; now is it abandoned : "The ore goes first !"

Isolated by the high tide, with its defenders neutralized, the "Delirium galaxy" may be your next victim.



The ultimate flood. Though a turret is destroyed, this space-ship of the TATOU Consortium manages to lift off.





Free game piece enclosed !

It is imperative that you lift off before the Big Flood, announced for the 25th turn... Ground contact in 50 seconds. Welcome on Full Metal Planete ! Action, fights, stategy and diplomacy in a fantastic Sci-Fi world where up to 4 players (humans and robots) affront each other in a thrilling competition.
The computer plays not only the part of e referee but also offers you adversaries who are always available : 6 robot-players each having their own character, but they are all programmed for a sole aim : beating you !
Furthermore this game contains a graphic tool to create your company's blazon and strategical problems for you to solve in order to get trained. A superb adaptation of the board game in the style of the games created by the Cobra Soft team : Bertrand Brocard and Roland Morla.

A situation overview appears on the radar screen. Beware of threatening "Black Star" ! What about an alliance ?

The FULL METAL PLANETE'S pack mule is the barge which can transport ore and vehicles.

Stuck in the mud ! This venturesome crab has been surprised by the flood and can only hope for the next low tide.

Available on ATARI ST & STE - AMIGA - PC COMPATIBLES

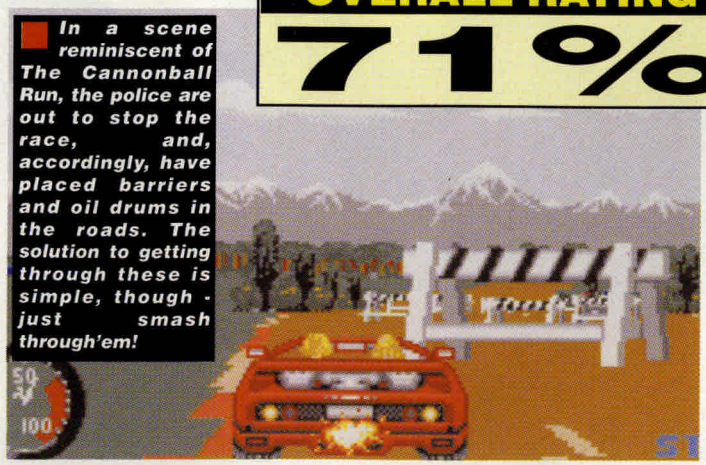
INFOGRAMES

OVERALL RATING

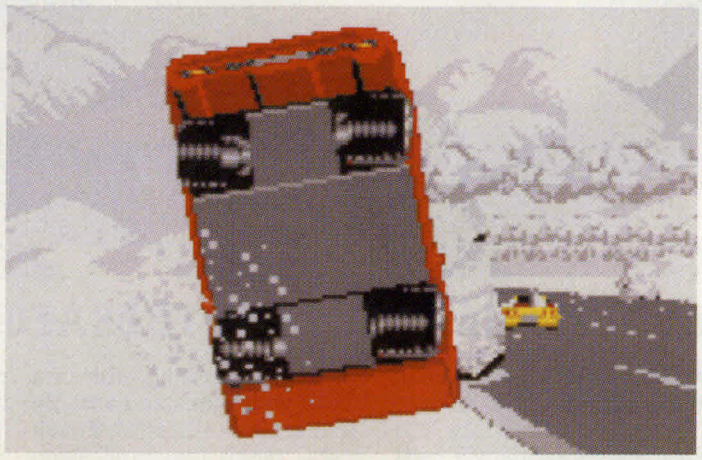
71%

If you are starting to lag behind, your turbo will prove extremely useful. It can be ignited using either the firebutton or the space bar, and is particularly useful for when you are pulling away.

In a scene reminiscent of The Cannonball Run, the police are out to stop the race, and, accordingly, have placed barriers and oil drums in the roads. The solution to getting through these is simple, though - just smash through'em!



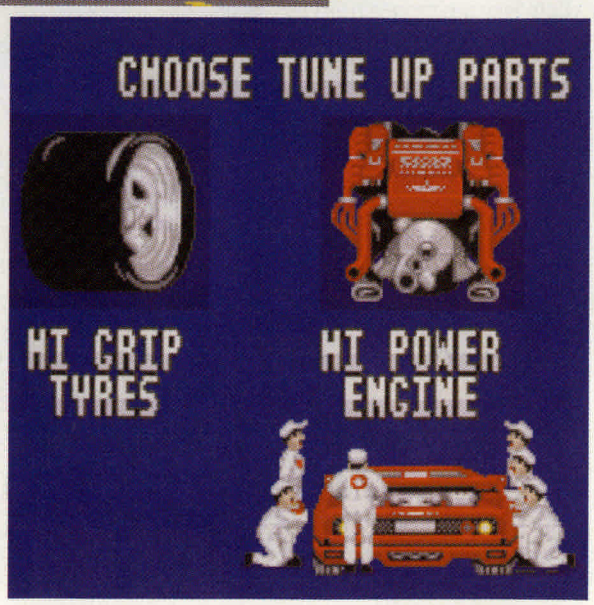
Each of the American states throws different hazards at you, ranging from the appalling weather of Pittsburgh to the deadly S-bends of New Orleans, and care must be taken not to fall foul of the conditions or your car may spin out of control or, even worse, flip over, losing you valuable time.



(Left) Prolonged use of the turbo facility can result in your engine overheating.

(Left & below) When you have reached the end of the fourth stage, a band will play in celebration of your achievement, and you are given the option of enhancing your Ferrari's performance. On offer, are tyres that grip the road more, reducing dangerous sliding; a better engine; or an improved turbo unit which lasts longer.

(Below) You are given three credits to help you get across America, and at the end of the game, your progress is shown on this colourful map.



Beginning in The Big Apple, there are twenty stages to be raced through before the Turbo Outrun trophey is yours. Just for good luck, your blonde passenger gives you a peck on the cheek as the mechanics finish their work.

Your Ferrari has two gears, and these can either be changed manually or automatically by the computer. Your choice is made before you start the race.

US GOLD £24.99

TURBO OUTRUN

Following the biggest selling computer game of all time is a far from easy task, but U.S. Gold are giving it a go with the long-awaited sequel to Outrun - the game that sold nearly 1,000,000 copies. Originally, Outrun was going to be followed by Outrun Europa, a variation of the original theme written by the original game's authors, Probe. The game was going to be a race across the world, with your precious Ferrari roaring through places like London, Paris and Rome and, in addition, your car was also going to be able to perform unique actions that weren't available in the original game - for instance, if you wanted to take a particular route but changed your mind, you would be able to either stick the car in reverse or perform a U-turn! However, due to programming difficulties, the game was unfortunately never released. Around this time, though, Sega had already produced an enhanced sequel to the spectacular coin-op, and U.S. Gold snapped up the chance to convert it.

Once again, you are placed behind the wheel of your expensive Ferrari F40, with your blonde-haired girlfriend at your side, and you are ready to take part in a massive race across America. The race is divided into five stages, each of which span four American locations, including Memphis, Indianapolis, and Dallas, and your only aim is to make it to each state's checkpoint within the strict time-limit; failure results in your disqualification from the race, and the loss of one of your three credits. You start the race in New York and your eventual destination is Los Angeles, but, unlike the original Outrun, the route is pre-determined, and you cannot choose which states you have to drive through. In addition, several changes have been made to your Ferrari, the most notable of which is the new 'turbo' feature of the title. As well as the conventional two-gear system of the first game, extra acceleration can be obtained at the press of a button by igniting your special turbo booster, and this enhancement is the key to making it to the checkpoints. However, to compensate for your car's enhancement, each state's roads are choc-a-bloc with police cars, barriers, and natural dangers, such as ice and water, and contact with these will either send your car into an uncontrollable spin or flip it over, both of which waste valuable time.

Should you make it to the end of every fourth stage, though, any time remaining will be added to your score, and you will be offered the option of customising your car. On offer are extra gripping tyres, a faster engine, or an even more powerful turbo, and once added to your vehicle, they are permanent.

STEVE

I wasn't too keen on the original Outrun, as I didn't think it played that well. Turbo Outrun, though, is nearer the mark, and, although still not perfect, plays well. The graphics this time are larger and smoother, and the gameplay bigger and better. The screen update is fairly smooth and very fast, and this gives the game the feeling of speed which was missing from the first game. Basically, although not a perfect conversion - and there is no way it could have been - Turbo Outrun is a playable race game that deserves consideration.

DOUG

The graphics are a bit better than that of the first OutRun, and it's a little bit faster, but as far as I'm concerned, the game is no better than the first one. The game's controls are very jerky, mainly because of the use of a joystick, and the bends seem to come and go so fast. Turbo OutRun just doesn't appeal to me; and if you didn't like the first one it won't appeal to you either.

ALEX

Unlike Chase H.Q., Turbo Outrun is just a racing game, the only objective being to get to a certain checkpoint in the allocated time. The game is a vast improvement over the original Outrun, mainly because it is easy to play. The graphics are nice and an adequate tune plays throughout, changing when each stage has been completed. As a straightforward racing game, Turbo Outrun is as good as any, but otherwise there is not that much to keep you coming back to it for more.

GRAPHICS

Your Ferrari is a large, detailed character, and the other cars are also well-drawn. In addition, the numerous backdrops and landscapes are all very detailed.

64%

SOUND

Although each state is accompanied by a separate tune, they seem to be too laid-back and should have been racier. Effectswise, Turbo features the usual whines and rumbles.

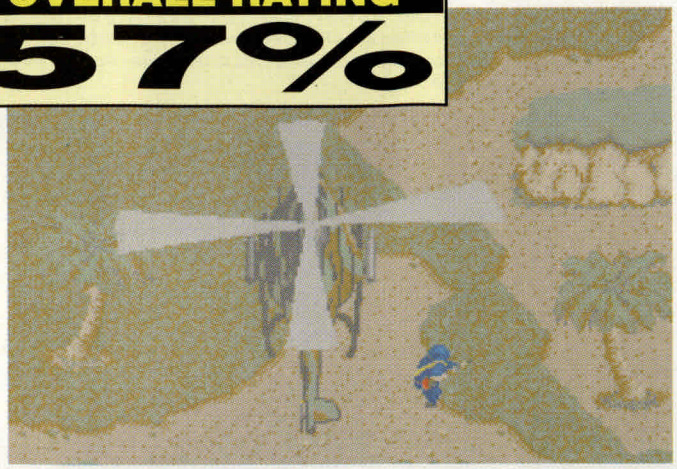
63%

OVERALL RATING

57%

ELITE £19.99

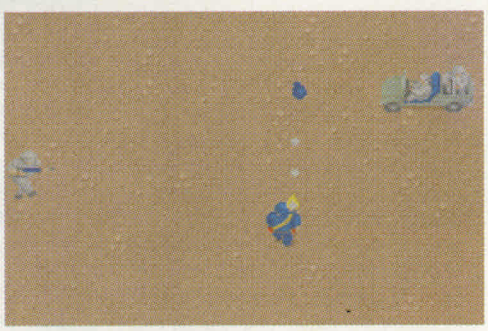
COMMANDO

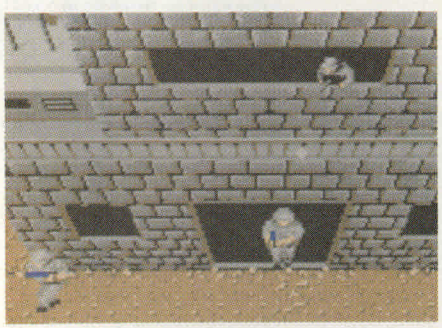


Joe begins his mission of devastation having been dropped off by a helicopter. After a cheery wave, it's back to business, and the game begins.

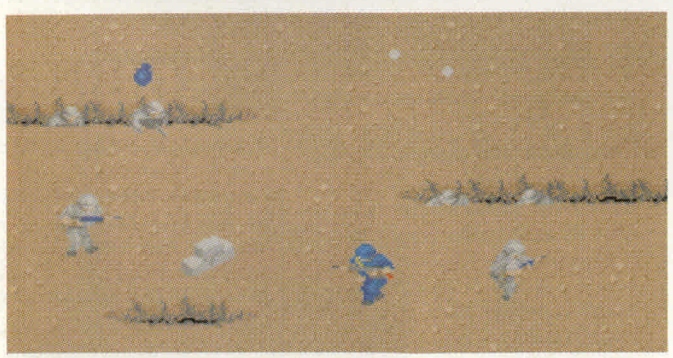
As Joe makes his way up the vertically-scrolling screen, avoiding the grenades and bullets of the enemy, he will occasionally stumble across a guarded hostage. If the two guards can be killed, the hostage will run away, leaving you a generous bonus.

If things are getting hot, a grenade will make things easier. Keeping the firebutton depressed launches the explosive, although they can only be thrown upscreen.





Before access to the next stage is gained, Joe must clear the screen of the dozen enemy soldiers that attack him. Avoiding their bullets and grenades, you eventually clear the screen, and romp off to the next level to repeat the process.



As if it were not enough trying to avoid contact with bullets, grenades and the enemy, Joe must also be careful not to fall in one of the many trenches that are dotted throughout the levels.

The second game to arrive from Elite's 'oldies-but-goldies' series, is Commando - the game that spawned a dozen clones. Stepping into the khaki outfit of one Super Joe Crack, your mission is a brief one: make your way deep into the enemy's base, causing as much devastation as possible. To do this, you are armed with a machine-gun and an unlimited supply of bullets as well as six grenades, although extra supplies of the latter can be collected along the way. When the game was released as a coin-op four years ago, its unique approach to the vertically-scrolling shoot'em-up genre made it an instant hit. Instead of guiding the latest in mega-death-dealing spaceships through wave after wave of aliens, you could guide a little soldier through wave after wave of enemy soldiers - novel, eh? It was, however, the manouevrability of your character that made Commando such a hit. Whereas in normal shoot'em-ups you could only move left and right, Commando gave you a free run of the screen, allowing you to use objects, such as trees and walls, as cover. In addition, the use of Super Joe's grenades made accuracy a necessity, instead of just obliterating everything in the vicinity with a smart bomb.

The main objective behind Joe's mission is the ultimate destruction of the rebel band's fortress. This, however, lies hidden at the end of the game, and he must battle through several stages of mayhem before he can blow it up. Along the way, Joe will be attacked by men with grenades and bullets, as well as those who patrol the area in jeeps and tanks, and contact with either the enemy or their flak result in the loss of one of Joe's five lives

DOUG

Golden oldies seem to be all the rage lately, and Elite have really brought out an oldie with Commando. But that said, even though Commando appeared about four years ago, it beats quite a lot of the games that are appearing nowadays, which shows just how much computer games are progressing in some areas. Although I wouldn't really recommend Commando because it's so easy, it's better than quite a few other games that are around.

STEVE

I quite like the idea of some of the older coin-ops being converted, and would love to see the likes of Scramble and Ghosts'n'Goblins recreated perfectly on the Amiga. Commando is a perfect example of how well one of the ageing games can be converted, except that is now looking a little dated - especially for the hefty twenty-quid price tag. That said, it is still a playable little game, just don't expect to be playing it in a month or two's time.

GRAPHICS

Almost exactly the same as those in the original coin-op - except that, four years on, they don't look so impressive now.

52%

SOUND

An inappropriate tune warbles on as you play, and this is backed up by a few wimpy sound effects.

43%

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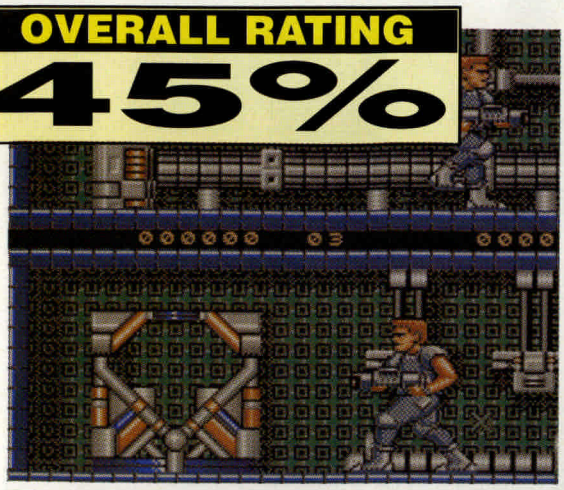
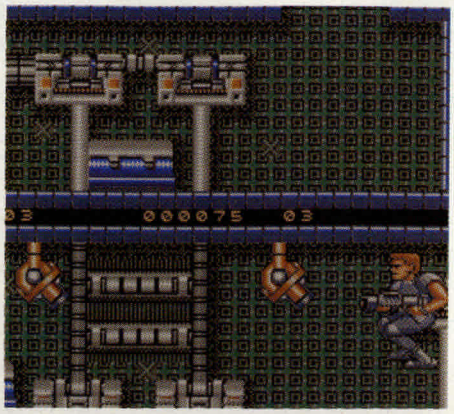
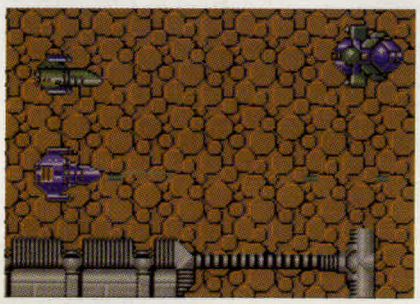


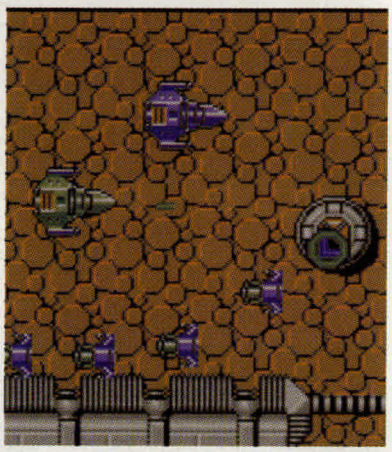
■ To aid you as you make your way through the defence centre, you can use the time-saving teleports which are activated by pushing the joystick up when you are in them.

■ As you stomp through the flick-screens, ceiling and floor-mounted guns and large robots will be out to kill you. However, providing you are quick on the draw, they can all be killed with a few shots from your laser.



■ As you fly over the now-hostile surface of Hazbal, the Hellraiser ships attack you from the left and right, and only skilful manoeuvring and shooting will see you safely through.





■ (Left & above) Occasionally, you will come across pick-ups which enhance your ship, adding either sights or a powerful laser. However, if the same icon is collected twice, you will lose the add-on.

ACTUAL SCREENSHOTS £19.95

HELLRAISER

As Earth's colonized planets spread further through the galaxy, they attracted the unwanted attention of other hostile cultures. One particular race, known as the Hellraisers, were a particularly ruthless breed, and had gained galactic infamy for their murderous ways. For years, though, nobody had seen the Hellraisers. They had taken a severe beating from the Earth's forces on several occasions, and had retreated through lack of numbers. Now, however, they have returned, and are at present occupying Earth's latest conquest, the planet Hazbal. Each of three defence systems located on that planet are under the control of the Hellraisers, and must be cleared before they turn them on the Earth.

You are the leader of a squad of three fighters, and you have been given two objectives: first infiltrate the base, destroying any of the hostile forces you encounter; and, secondly, on your way to the next city, destroy as many of the Hellraiser's airborne forces as possible. To help you with this task, you are equipped with standard issue: a battlesuit and blaster, and a Wasp Battle Cruiser. One or two players can assume the roles of the attack squadron members, and you begin the game having entered the first of the defence units. Making your way through the flick-screen playing area, avoiding the various gun installations and droids, and using teleports to your advantage, you must make your way to the docking bay where your Wasp is waiting. Once in, there will be a short load, and the next section will load. Skimming across the planet's surface is depicted as a horizontally-scrolling shoot'em-up, with you using your front-mounted lasers to kill the attacking Hellraiser ships. Once this level is completed, you will be granted entrance to the next, larger defence system.

GRAPHICS

Although the sprites are large in the first section, they somehow fail to impress and look too square. Likewise, in the second section the bland nature of the sprites and the poor use of colour let the side down.

49%

SOUND

A repetitive tune plays on the title screen, and the effects consist of barely audible footsteps and very basic zapping sounds.

40%

DOUG

The first level of Hell Raiser is so similar to Psygnosis's Obliterator it's unreal, but at least they were going to clone a good game; the only problem is they didn't clone it that well. The second level is a below average shoot'em-up, and didn't keep my interest for that long. Overall, Hell Raiser isn't that great, but you never know, it might appeal to someone.

STEVE

Despite having two totally different stages, Hellraiser fails to impress. The speed of the first section is agonisingly slow, while the second stage is so easy it might as well not be there. Both stages feature dull and listless graphics, with very little colour being used, and the sound also fails to impress. That said, there is a modicum of enjoyment to be found in Hellraiser, but not enough to warrant the price tag.

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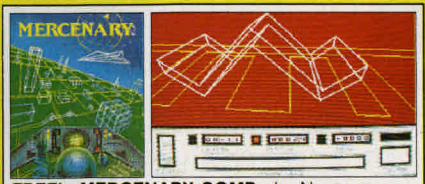

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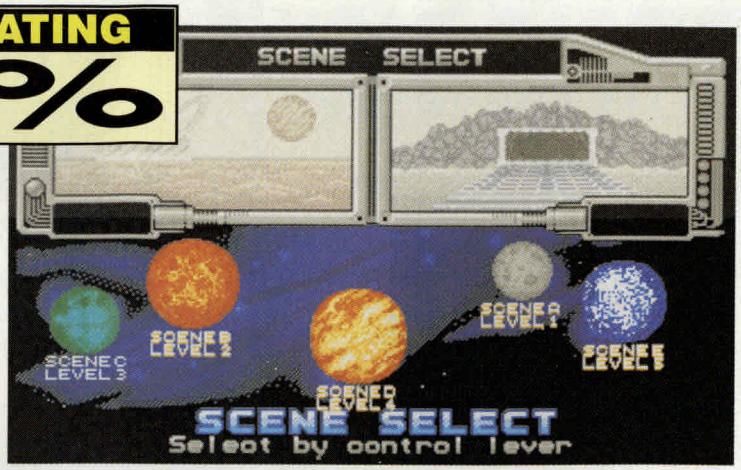
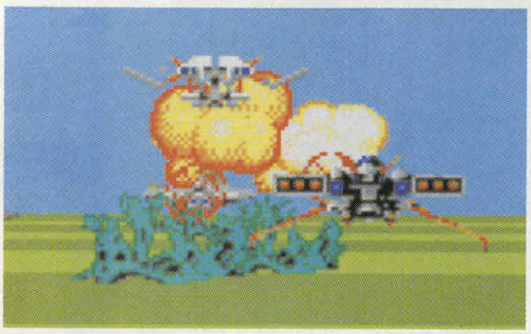
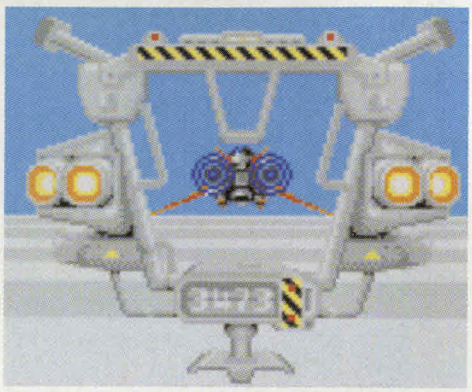
OVERALL RATING
36%



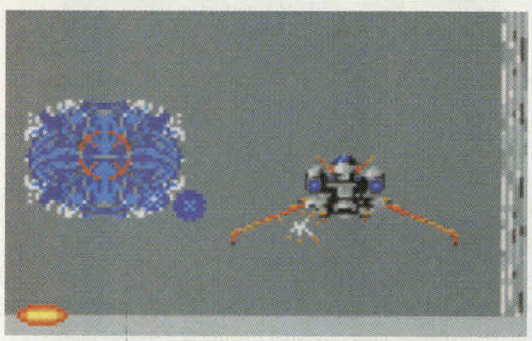
Choose from this map which planet to start on. Although the planets boast different features, but the only thing making them harder is the length of the level.

(Below) Bullets have little effect, but once a missile has locked on to its target, the unfortunate alien won't stand a chance.





You begin your mission with a full quota of energy, and are dropped onto the planet's surface by a variety of ships. Once the mission begins, your energy rapidly decreases, and this process is speeded up whenever you are hit by anything, which means that contact with the enemy will make reaching the end of the level most doubtful.



The master computers appear at the end of each stage, and present no major problem. So just launch a couple of missiles at them and make your way to the next planet.

ACTIVISION £24.95

GALAXY FORCE

Another of Sega's graphically superb and hydraulically-controlled arcade 'experiences', Galaxy Force puts you in the seat of one of the latest space fighters as you attempt to save the galaxy once more. The worlds surrounding your planet have come under a blistering attack from a race known only as the Forth Empire, and they have taken control of these five planets, and are now preparing to bag yours to complete their set. Your aim is to fly across the surface of the planet, and then into it, as you head towards the Empire's giant battlecomputer which is located at the planet's core. However, several thousand Forth Empire spaceships and motherships are all out to thwart your liberation plans, and need to be destroyed with the homing missiles and lasers that are your standard issue.

At the start of the game, you are offered the choice of which planet to liberate first. Each of the five stages ranges in difficulty, from the relatively easy Velteor to the final battle in the hidden zone - the nearest thing the Forth Empire has to a home planet. Once you have selected your starting level, there is a brief load, and the game begins with your ship being dropped onto the planet's surface. After that, you soar through wave after wave of enemy ships, destroying the majority of them with your guided missiles that lock on whenever an alien is perilously close. Once sufficient ground has been covered on the planet's surface, you will be ordered to penetrate their base, and will fly into a winding tunnel of deadly cavern walls, and must reach and destroy the master computer hidden at the planet's core.

GRAPHICS

The sprites are fairly close to those of the coin-op, but they seem a bit weedy and insignificant against the garish and confusing backdrops - especially in the terrible tunnel section.

43%

SOUND

Minimal to say the least. An authentic rendition of the game's opening ditty is recreated but, otherwise, the sound is very dull.

55%

DOUG

Galaxy Force is a very below-standard shoot'em-up that very soon had me pulling out my hair in boredom. The graphics are quite nice, but unfortunately can't make up for the dire game. The graphics and movement are supposed to give a feeling of 3-D movement, but the game fails to simulate this. Basically, Galaxy Force was another 'Mission Impossible' conversion, except, unlike Powerdrift, Activision couldn't pull this one off.

STEVE

The only decent thing about the Galaxy Force coin-op is the graphics - its gameplay is extremely repetitive and it plays extremely badly. So, take away the nice graphics, and what do you get? The dullest Amiga shoot'em-up in many a while, that's what. Admittedly, the programmers have done everything they could have done, and most of the gameplay aspects are recreated. But without the graphics and sound of the original, this just isn't Galaxy Force. A terrible conversion that is best ignored.

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AMIGA ACTION

OVERALL RATING

81%

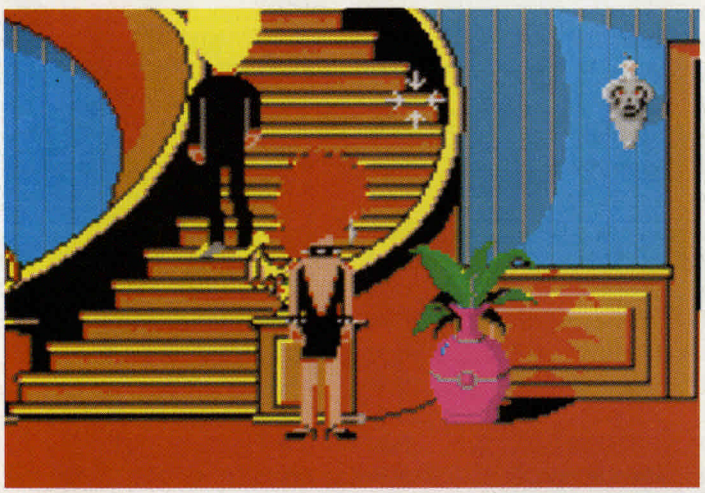
The daring teenagers creep up to the doorway of the old mansion, but how will they get in? Perhaps you should look for a door key.

There are six pals to choose from, although only two can join you on your mission to rescue Sandy. When highlighted, you will be told a little background info on the person.

(Below) The stairway will take you further into the mansion's deepest and darkest rooms, but beware: Ed and Edna are constantly wandering around the house.

LUCASFILM £24.99

MANIAC MANSION

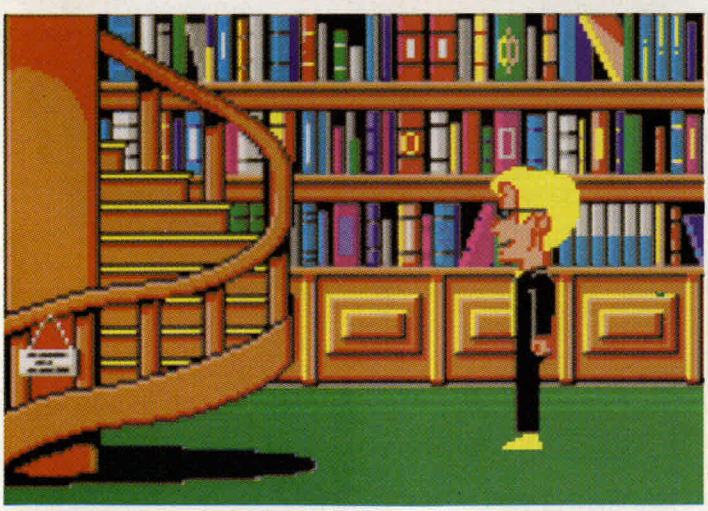


From the blackness of space came, what seemed by the townsfolk to be a meteor of some description. It hit the hill and embedded itself deep into the earth. There were no real after-effects preceding the collision, but the old house on top of the hill once again seemed occupied. There had been unconfirmed reports of an evil Doctor Fred and his family inhabiting the house and performing strange rituals and experiments, but there was really no hard evidence to warrant an investigation.

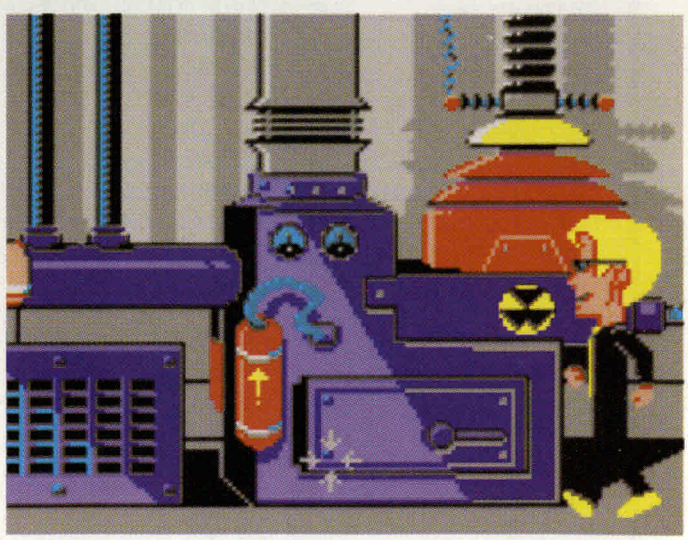
The story goes that the warped scientist, Dr. Fred, his wife Nurse Edna and their son, Ed, have kidnapped your beautiful girlfriend, Sandy, and are about to turn her brains into blancmange. You control David,Sandy's boyfriend, and have taken it upon yourself, with a little help from your friends, to enter the creepy old house and rescue her. You make your choice from six of your

DOUG

Lucasfilm have really been excelling themselves lately. What with the Indy adventure and now this long-awaited conversion, things are coming along nicely. Maniac Mansion is a brilliant adventure on its own, but when you include its interactiveness you really have a winner. The game has a good supply of humour to keep you going, and the graphics are amazing. Worth every single penny.

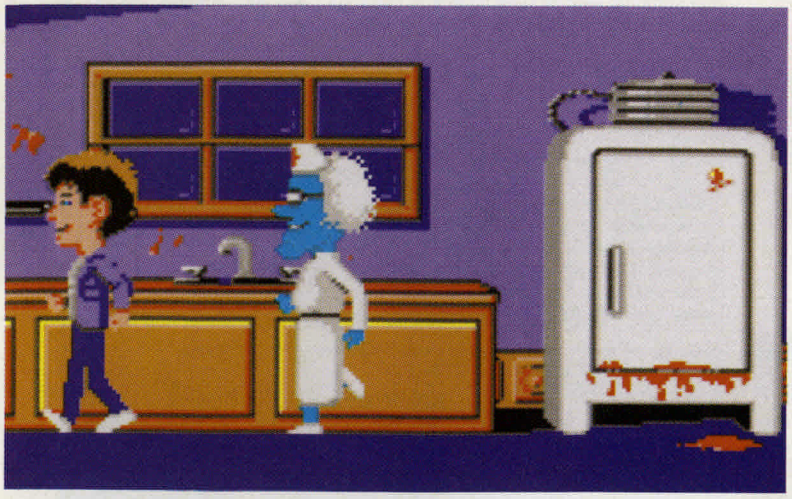


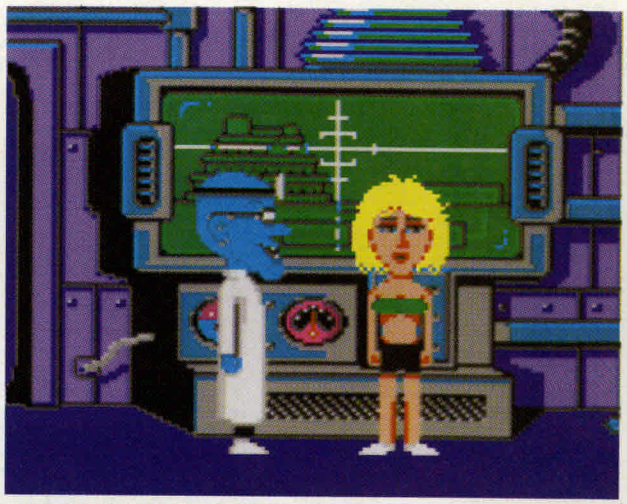
(Above) The library is old and unused, even the staircase has crumbled and become exceedingly dangerous. Remember - not everything is as it seems. The panels, for instance, look a little worn.



(Right) After finding the secret room, you make your way down the darkened stairway. On reaching the bottom you find yourself confronted by some kind of reactor.

Yuk! This is probably one of the most gruesome kitchens you will ever set eyes on. Blood oozes from the fridge. Dare you open the door and find out what's inside?





Sandy is being held in Dr. Fred's laboratory. There is no chance of escape as the door is heavily protected. Dr. Fred smirks and gloats over his pretty prize. Heh! Heh!

pals, each has his or her own special attributes so it is wise to take your time when choosing, and select the most skilled team.

You begin your rescue at the front door of the house itself. Don't try knocking, as the front door is locked. A key would come in useful. Once the team is finally in the mansion, they can all split up and explore the rooms individually. This will speed up the rescue as well as help solve certain puzzles need more than one person to solve them. Meanwhile, Dr. Fred is giving Sandy the low-down on his evil plan, amidst her screams of, "Help!","help!".

There are several items dotted around the mansion, which can be picked up. Each character can hold as many items as necessary and these are all displayed at the bottom of the 'word-options' in the inventory, which can be scrolled to display hidden objects. On first appearances, it is obvious that all is not quite right in the house.

There is blood and gore everywhere - even in the fridge. No one is safe due to the fact that Ed and Edna are constantly patrolling the mansion. Should they bump into one of your characters, they will be instantly apprehended and locked up in a cell. All the clues have some bearing on the game and will help you in rescuing Sandy.

Maniac Mansions is mouse controlled with a 'pick-and-point'-type interface. Basically, sentences are created by linking the base commands with objects in the room, thus eradicating tiresome sentence typing. Movement of the characters is controlled by pointing the mouse to the destination and pressing the left mouse-button. All three characters can be controlled during the game by selecting 'New Kid'. Character collaboration is useful when solving some of the group puzzles., and can prove essential when one of your friends gets caught by the weird house-owners.

GRAPHICS

Although not quite in the style of Indy, Maniac Mansions is brightly coloured and full of surprises. Attention to detail has been well observed and builds on the game's spooky atmosphere.

70%

SOUND

Apart from an atmospheric tune in the start sequence, the Amiga's sound capabilities have been sadly neglected. Still, this does not detract from the game's appeal.

60%

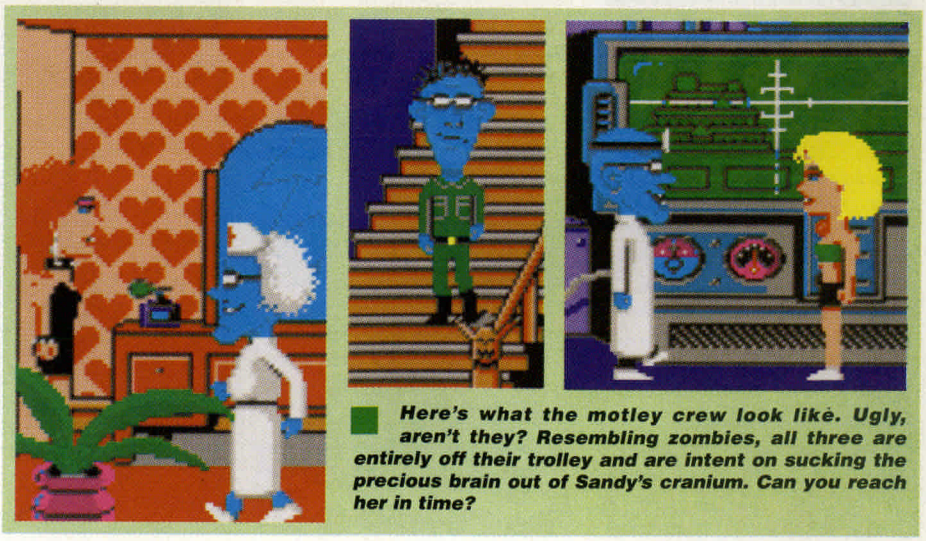
STEVE

Playing Maniac Mansion is like taking part in an episode of Scooby Doo! The game's scenario is straight out of the aforementioned cartoon, and lends itself superbly to a computer game. Exploring the spooky old house in search of my girlfriend wasn't particularly taxing, but the game is fun to play. The mad prof's house is full of secret compartments and rooms, and there are lots of B-movie-style objects to pick up and use. Basically, although obviously not as technically good as Indy, I enjoyed Maniac Mansion and look forward to more of the same.

WHITEY

Lucasfilm are pulling off a whole string of successes these days, and after the superb Indy adventure they've still managed to maintain this high standard. Maniac Mansion should keep you enthralled for quite some time. The puzzles are cleverly thought out and keep you guessing. These types of game can only get better and Maniac Mansion is definitely a step in the right direction.

Should you become bored on your search, you can always sit down and watch a little telly. There's even a hi-fi, but you'll have to find the cassette.



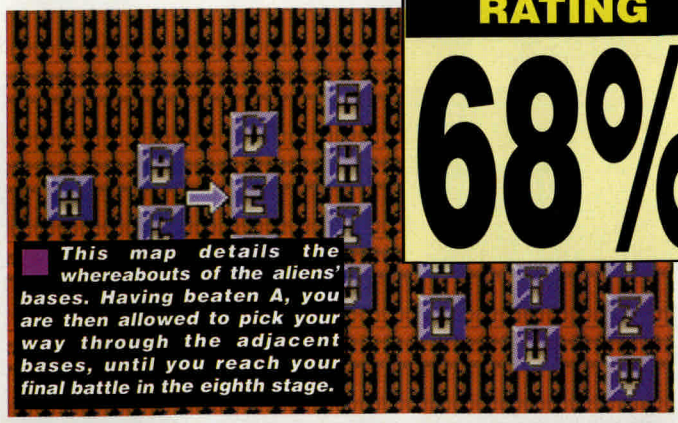
Here's what the motley crew look like. Ugly, aren't they? Resembling zombies, all three are entirely off their trolley and are intent on sucking the precious brain out of Sandy's cranium. Can you reach her in time?

THE EDGE £19.95

DARIUS+

OVERALL RATING

68%



This map details the whereabouts of the aliens' bases. Having beaten A, you are then allowed to pick your way through the adjacent bases, until you reach your final battle in the eighth stage.

Like Ninja Warriors, Darius was another Taito coin-op which was played over three linked screens. However, due to the obvious restrictions imposed by this system, like Random Access had (the programmers of Ninja Warriors), it was decided to change the game slightly, keeping the basic idea but changing a few features - thus, the game is now called Darius +, because of these enhancements.

Darius + is a horizontally-scrolling shoot'em-up in which you and a party of back-up ships have been sent to destroy a hostile race of aliens who have set up a base on the sea beds of all the large oceans. Whilst setting up their base and weapon factories, huge doses of radiation were released, which changed the genetic design of the normally placid sea-life, multiplying their size up to a hundred times that of normal. Seizing this as the perfect opportunity to practise their cybernetics, the aliens then replaced the giant creatures' brain with their own advanced technology, and created giant protective ships which protected them from Earth's scout ships. To free an ocean, you must battle with the alien fleets and make your way to the mutated cyborg at the end of the level. Once this is destroyed, you will have liberated that ocean, and given the option of which base to attack next. To make your task slightly easier, you can collect clusters of small pods floating through the depths, and when these are collected, extra features, can be added.. However, if the constant bombardment of missiles proves too much and your ship explodes, you will lose the last two add-ons collected.

DOUG

Darius is OK, but it has its faults. The gameplay is very cluttered and a lot of the time you can't keep track of everything that's going on. Another major bug is that if you miss one of the power-ups for your main ship, then no more power-up icons appear for the rest of that level. The game isn't too easy, but once you've got the hang of it you should be able to complete it without much bother.

STEVE

I really rate the Darius coin-op, as it plays really well. And to an extent, this can be said about Darius +, only I feel it was a mistake making the sprites so big. Because the original coin-op used three screens, the large sprites didn't look out of place; but in this conversion, they make manoeuvring tight, and the screen cluttered. Despite the cluttered screen and an annoying bug that sends you back to base A when you choose C, Darius + is a playable shoot'em-up, but not a close conversion of the game it is trying to emulate.

GRAPHICS

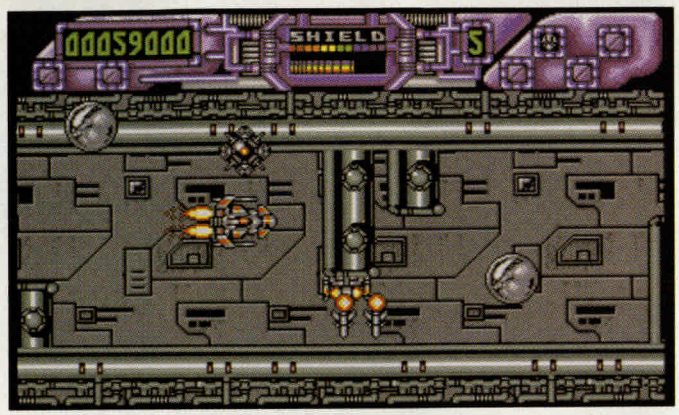
Good, but it is the giant end-of-level guardians that steal the show - they are brilliant.

71%

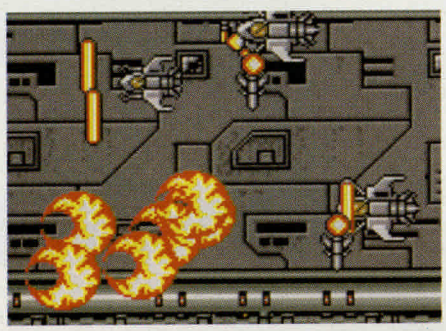
SOUND

A pleasant tune plays during loading, but the in-game effects are very run of the mill and uninspiring.

63%



The pick-up pods come in two shapes: the first one enhances your basic firepower, whilst the second one allows you to add new weapons to your ship, which are accessed using the keyboard.



Everything in Darius + is hostile, and contact with the enemy, their missiles or the cavern walls reduces your ship's strength. And if this reaches zero, your ship explodes and the last two weapons collected are lost.

One of the best features of Darius is its end-of-level guardians. Each is made up of sections, and by gradually destroying the creatures' weak points, they will die, allowing you to progress to the next level.

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SKRULL

If ever there was a program that could describe the word clone, it has to be Skrull. If you've ever played the game Barbarian by Psygnosis, then you'll certainly recognise this game. The game is totally controlled via the mouse by clicking on various icons shown on the right-hand side of the screen. There are seven different icons in all and each have two uses: one when you click the left mouse button, and a second when you press the right. The standard walk and run are present, along with pick up and drop. Attacking people can be done in three different ways, two via the sword icon, and one when you click on the jump icon with the right button. This makes you jump in the air and give a quick slash with your mighty blade. Stop is the last icon, and this, believe it or not, will make you stop if you are walking, or enter somewhere if you press the left button.

A maximum of three objects can be held at one particular time, and these are represented in three different boxes in the bottom left of the screen. Most of the objects you find can be picked up and interacted with the scenery in some way, but the occasional item might simply restore your health. Your health is shown as a bar at the bottom of the screen, and as you take damage it will gradually decrease until it runs out, and you die. There are many monsters and nasties waiting to attack you and help you on the road to death, but there are also an ample amount of tricks and traps waiting for you to fall into.

GRAPHICS

Averagely drawn graphics and a bland and boring use of colour. So it's meant to be the gloomy world of Darkness, but did they have to take it so literally.

51%

SOUND

Very few sound effects, that don't exactly do a lot for the game and it wouldn't have hurt to include a few more.

43%

DOUG

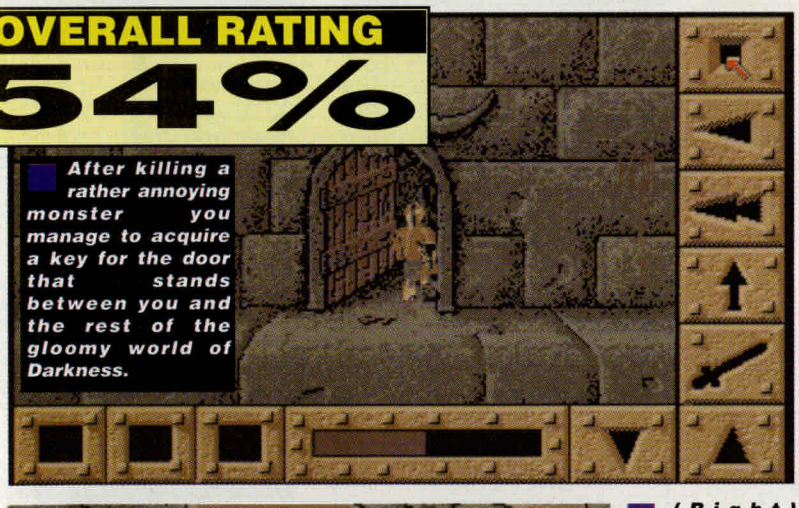
This game copies Barbarian so much it's unbelievable. Even down to the controls the game is the same. Admittedly, Skrull has a few little bits of its own, like doors and stairs, but not much else. Skrull is a larger game, and will take a while longer to beat, but for my money I'd go out and buy the Triad compilation game with Barbarian and two other games on it.

STEVE

When you consider that Psygnosis' Barbarian was released two years ago, you would have thought that an upgraded version of the game would feature a few improvements. However, although Skrull has slightly better gameplay and graphics, the icon system used makes the game very frustrating to play - a major problem when you frantically want to move your character out of harms way. Still, that said, Skrull is far from awful: there is a neat idea behind the dodgy control system and trial-and-error gameplay; it's just not implemented that well.

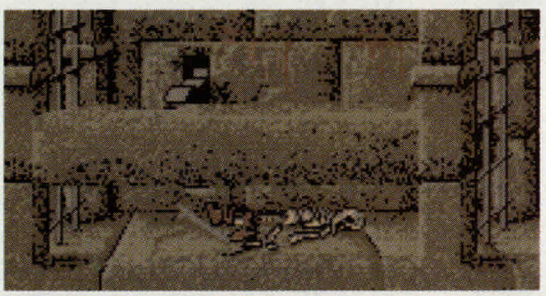
OVERALL RATING

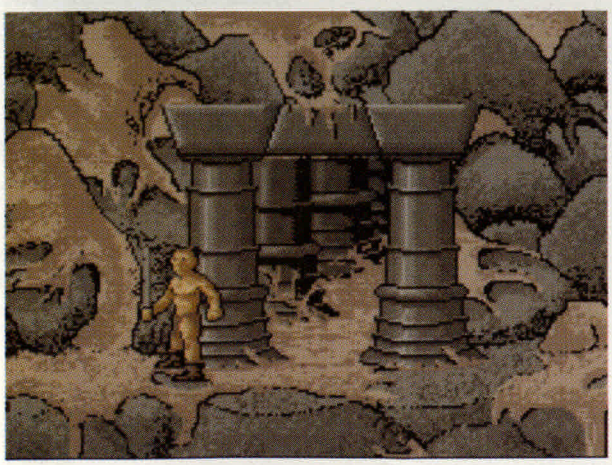
54%



After killing a rather annoying monster you manage to acquire a key for the door that stands between you and the rest of the gloomy world of Darkness.

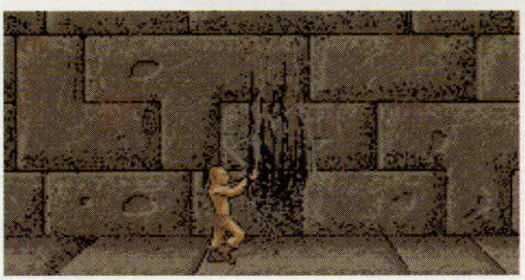
You step forward to pick up an intriguing-looking object on the floor, and step right into the middle of a trap instead. It looks like your going to be able to start your own pizza company at this rate.





Wandering around the world of Darkness you come across a ancient looking temple; but what lies inside - help or danger? Well, there's only one way to find out.

(Right) Taking a short run up, our ugly hero manages to jump a canyon with a single bound, and a little somersault in the middle. How nice!



Entering the next screen you come up against a less-than-pleased-looking monster. But with the sound of metal rubbing metal, you draw your sword and charge into battle.

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TIME

OVERALL RATING

61%

Time is an arcade adventure where you must control a character called Dr. Hunter, who must (although he doesn't know it at first) eventually travel through time and try to slightly alter the outcome of the human race. The entire game is controlled via icons which will allow you to move and interact with the huge amount of people that you will come across.

The usual movement icons are available, enabling you to walk fast or slow and turn to look at part of any location. Although none of the items are actually shown on the game screen, whenever you walk pass something that can be picked up or used, an eye in the bottom left-hand side of the screen will open, indicating the object's presence. A mouth accommodates the bottom row of icons on your control panel, and through this you can communicate with other people. When you meet someone, if they don't talk to you themselves, you can click on the icon to start a conversation, and keep on clicking the icon until the person you are speaking to has no more to say. The standard pick up or drop are here, plus an offer icon when you might want to offer an object to someone. Four different objects can be held at one time, and these are shown in boxes at the top of the control panel. When an item can be used in a certain place, a use icon will light up to signify the possibility. While on Historisat a door icon can be used to move the positions of doors, so they can lead to more than one part of the satellite.

GRAPHICS

Quite good, with some amusing animated pictures of people that appear whenever you interact with someone. The game is easy to control, with not too many icons.

58%

SOUND

A really good opening tune while the game gives you a bit of background plot, and a selection of sound effects during the game.

65%

DOUG

If you enjoy a good old arcade/adventure, then you're going to love Time. The graphics aren't anything special, but the gameplay is excellent - and that's what counts. Interacting with the other characters is easy, and there are plenty of puzzles to solve. There is one problem with Time, though, and that is that the game had a tendency to give away the solutions to the puzzles, instead of leaving you to solve them.

STEVE

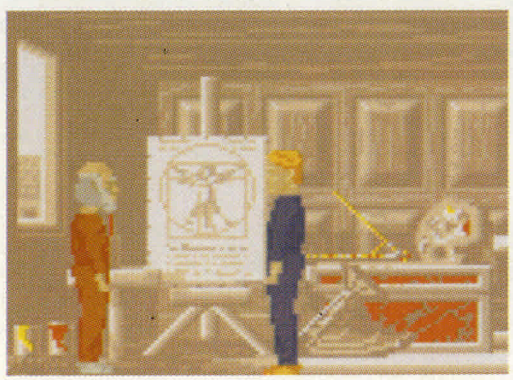
After such stunning arcade/adventures as Addictive's The Kristal, Time had to be very good to compete. Luckily, it makes the grade - just. The game utilises a very user-friendly system which allows easy interaction with the surrounding characters and objects, and it is this ease of use that made me start to like Time. As arcade/adventures go, Time isn't particularly hard, and a lot of the game involves wandering to and fro, but I wasn't expecting hectic action, so the lack of speed was passable. Not bad.

They don't call it the Historisat for nothing. Spread throughout the satellite are various galleries that show people from the past as holograms.

Myth has it that Merlin the wizard was responsible for Stonehenge, so now that you're here why don't you ask him. But more importantly, there's a certain object he has that can save the human race.

Nearly everyone in the game will have something to say to you, and most of it will help in some way or another, it's just a question of doing it in the right order.

Visiting a certain doctor back down on earth, you are transported into the future. The storyline starts to unfold and the game gets going.



After quite a bit of hassle on Historisat, you eventually make it back to the year 1500, and have a chat with old Leonardo da Vinci himself.

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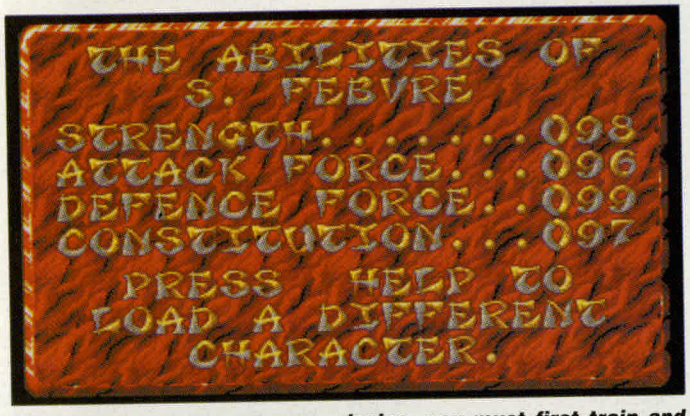
CHAMBERS OF SHAOLIN

As Hang Foy Qua peered through the trees the tranquility of the surroundings confirmed his suspicions - he had finally reached the great Shaolin Temple. He cautiously made his way up to the temple entrance, where he was greeted and welcomed in by one of the many monks. Taken before the abbot, Hang Foy Qua explained his story and the reason for his visit. His sister, Leia Sing, had been kidnapped by the Emperor's troops, who threatened that, should anyone attempt a rescue, she would be killed. On good advice, Hang Foy had been sent to the Shaolin Temple in the hope that the monks would help him. The abbot finally accepted him and trained him well over the months - Hang Foy was a good learner and student and his Shaolin Kung-Fu skills were some of the best to be seen, but before he could leave the temple he would have to pass through the six Chambers of Shaolin. Only a handful of monks had actually made it through the chambers, few ever returned. As Hang Foy prepared himself for the first test, the thought of his kidnapped sister strengthened his spirit.

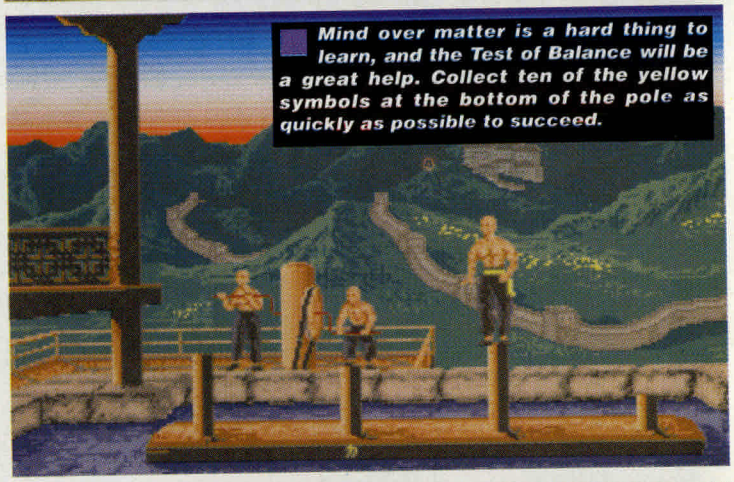
The Chambers of Shaolin consists of six different tests, each one requires the use of a specific skill for completion. The student is given a target to reach and he must perform this task



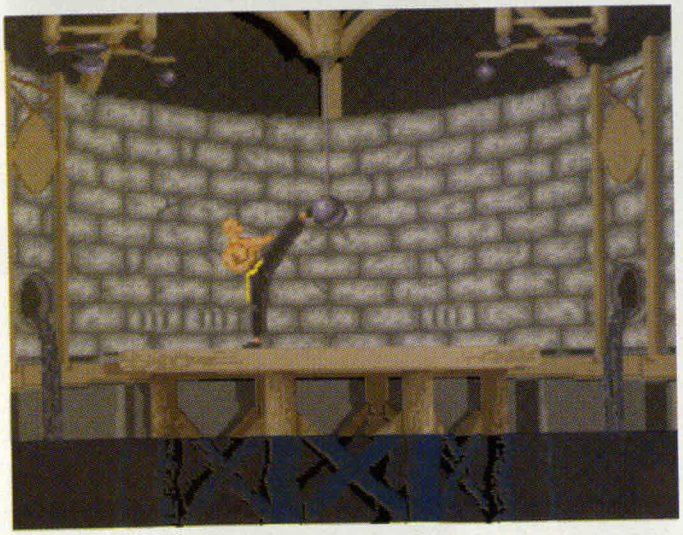
Before you can go on a mission, you must first train and prove your worth in the Chambers of Shaolin. Each test will enhance your four major skills in some way, and when once completed, your character could look like this.

There are six tests in all, each preparing you for the mission ahead. The Test of the Stick is the first and will speed your reactions and improve your ability at dodging attacks.

The second test also enhances your dodging abilities, having you trying to avoid axes and fireballs. At the end of the test, depending on how much energy you still have remaning, you will get a certain percentage of constitution.

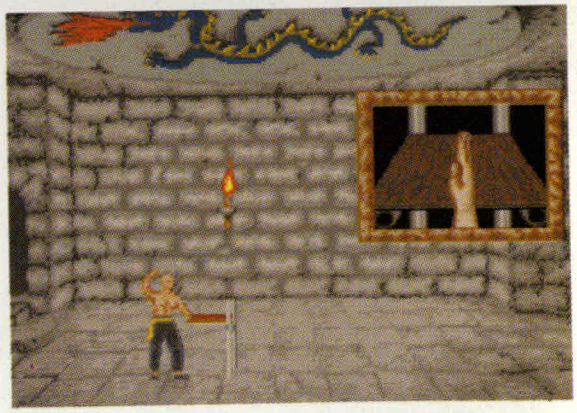


Mind over matter is a hard thing to learn, and the Test of Balance will be a great help. Collect ten of the yellow symbols at the bottom of the pole as quickly as possible to succeed.



Speed is what you will need if you are to survive the many encounters that lay on the path of evil, and Si Zhi Kuai, the Test of Speed, is the way to become dexterous.

The fifth test is a non-martial-arts test, but nevertheless one that will improve your strength and judgement no end. Break as many boards as you can, up to a possible maximum of four.



GRAPHICS

Each level has an attractive and, in many cases, animated background, and these and the sprites are of very good quality.

70%

SOUND

The game features both good music and effects, and the sounds of the thwacks and crunches are particularly effective.

68%

STEVE

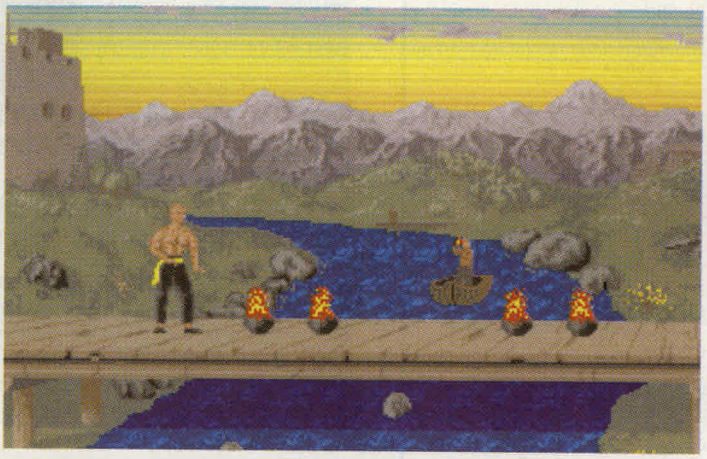
Normally, martial arts games rely on their speed and various moves to make them popular. Chambers of Shaolin, on the other hand, has the said features, as well as several playable tasks and a neat one-on-one beat'em-up to boot. I was particularly impressed with the way you could save your character, and the difference it made to your strength and fighting when entering combat - a feature which, just like the moves available in this section, is true to life. I wasn't really impressed with the task you undertake after battling through the combatants, but that is a small gripe in an otherwise excellent game.

successfully so that his mind and body will be correctly trained. On completion of all the tests, your student's attribute scores - strength, constitution etc. - will be displayed and you will be given the chance to save your character, should you wish to do so. If you are happy with your character, you can then select to fight your way through four of the best Shaolin monks in the temple. This is where your skills learnt in the chambers will prove their use. You have a wide range of Kung-Fu moves at your disposal which must be used perfectly if you are to defeat the four monks. Each fighter's health is indicated by his sash (belt) which shortens when hit and lengthens when attacking successfully. Should your sash reach zero, you will be defeated and have to return to fight the first Shaolin monk.

As the last Shaolin monk hits the floor, he flips back up and bows, indicating defeat. Now your quest can begin. You bid farewell to the monks of Shaolin and set of in search of your sister. You know full well that the Emperor's palace will be guarded strongly, but by whom, and what? You finally reach your first adversary - a red dragon that breathes fire. On dodging the fireballs you rush up to the dragon's head and deliver a jump-spinning back-kick. Your foot smashes into its head. On recovering, its eyes narrow and the razor-sharp jaws start to open, once again!

OVERALL RATING

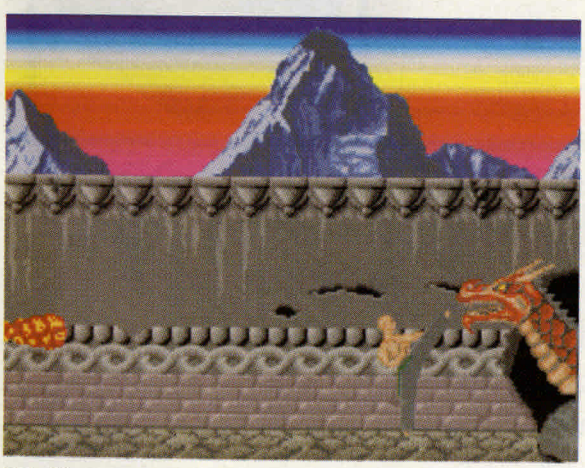
75%



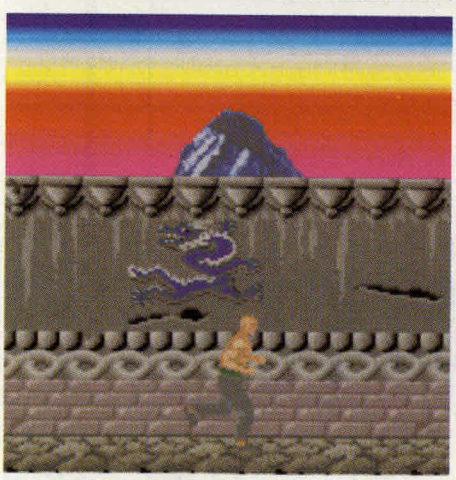
(Right) The final test and your last chance to upgrade your character's skills arrives. A good combination of timing and speed is needed.

You finally start your mission, and realise the difference a character's skills can make. Skills will decide your health, attacking damage and the damage you can sustain.

Four different monks will have to be fought, and as you progress, the colour of yours and your opponent's belt will increase. The fourth is best fighter there is but, once killed, what can come next?



You reach the city gates, and as you expected, it is guarded; but what you didn't expect was the guard to be a dragon. Using a couple of your moves, kill the dragon and complete the game.



Running alongside the city walls, you make your way towards the city gates. Timing will be needed to jump and duck the various obstacles, and each time you are hit, your precious energy will deplete that little bit further.

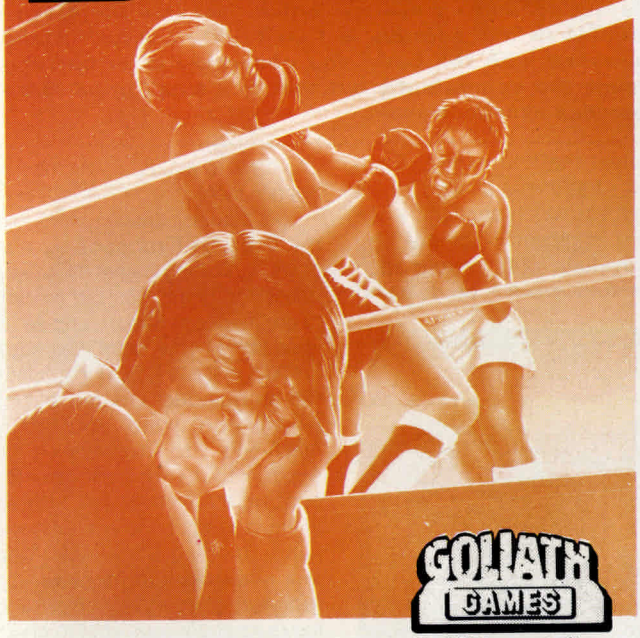
DOUG

At first, Chambers of Shaolin looked like a very poor game, but once played, the game grabs you, and keeps you glued to the computer for ages. The six tests are excellently presented and are a joy to play, while at the same time the combat sequences continue the outstanding playability of the game. If you've got enough money, go out and buy the game, and if you haven't, start saving.

ALEX

As martial arts games go, this has got to be the best one I've seen on the Amiga so far. Although International Karate + was good, Chambers of Shoalin completely overshadows it. The Six mini tests are great fun and the game is just as good, with the computer controlled characters actually having some intelligence, unlike so many previous karate games. Worth getting hold of.

World Championship BOXING MANAGER



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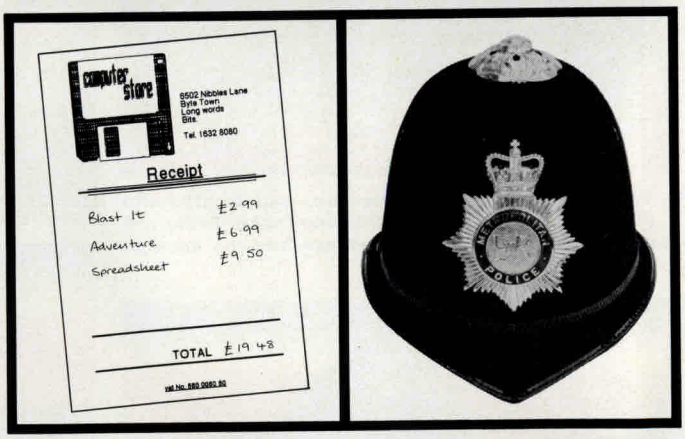

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Real Soon Now!

The word esoteric means 'that which is secret and arcane'. As a twist on this, the programmers of Esoterror have invented something 'secret and scary'. Behind Esoterror are Ian Harling, who you may or may not know produced all of the fantastic graphics for Ocean's, Lost Patrol, and Nick Byron, and the game came about after Ian decided he wanted something 'he could play'. Having played around on Elite's Space Harrier for a while, Ian came away feeling fairly impressed, but felt that the game could have done with a strategic element amongst all the blasting; something that would add an element of skill to the game - thus Esoterror was born.

The man behind the graphics, Ian Harling.

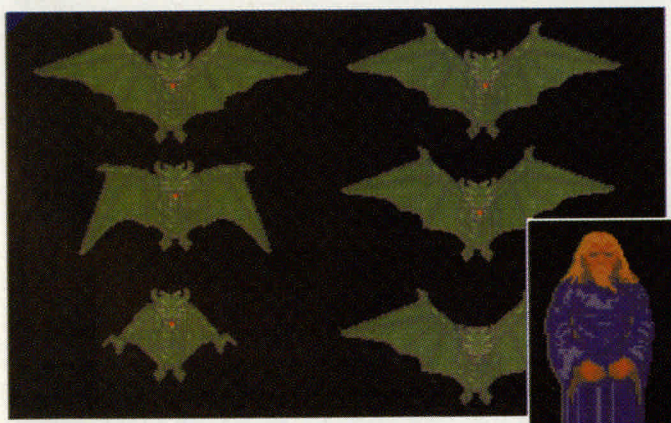
Nick Byron, would-be wizard, and programmer of Esoterror.

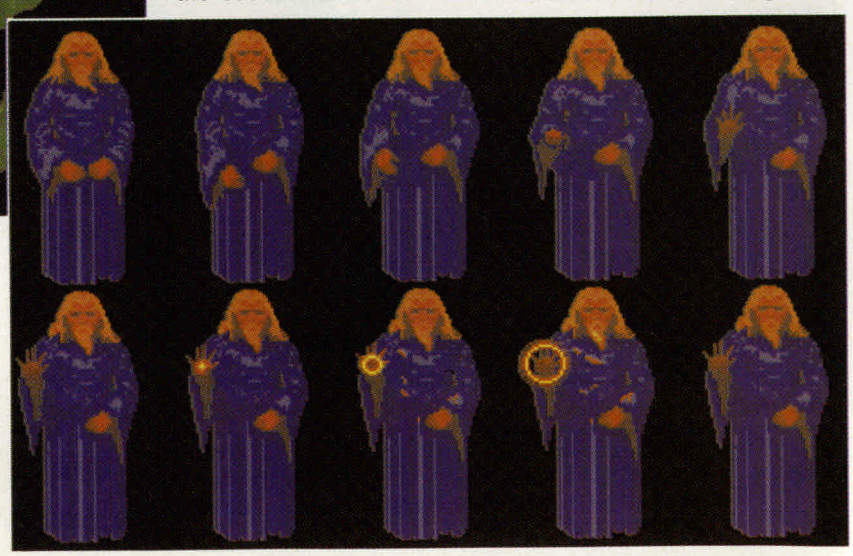
Wizards and Warlocks and All Things Mythical

A game set within the dark, mystical days of Wizards and Warlocks, Esoterror has the player assuming the role of an aging but powerful wizard whose territory has come under attack by evil wizards from another dimension. The land you look over stretches for several miles, and on each corner of your domain, you own a castle. It is these castles that you must protect, and this is achieved by completing several stages of arcade-based action. When designing Esoterror, Ian decided that he wanted the player to actually feel as if he was in full control over the onscreen action, and not just controlling a boring spaceship as it hurtled through the levels. To do this, the game began life with a pair of disembodied hands floating around the screen, and from these hands the protective bolts of magic are fired. All of the game's action is viewed in third-person perspective, with the countless waves of enemy magicians and their cronies flying towards you as they launch their spells and weapons at you. The key to Esoterror is the successful collection of these bolts and spells, and, when collected, they can be stored in your inventory until a sufficient number have been collected to upgrade your magic spells.

You Need Hands!

At present, the game only exists as a number of sprites and a neat rolling demo with your wizard's hands dealing death to all manner of evil creatures, but it has to be said that it is looking smooth. In addition, the game is





(Above) These graphics show the many frames of animation behind one of the attacking dragons. At first, they were only going to have three frames of movement, but Ian thought that they looked too much like wobbling Dodos, and consequently added two more frames, making the whole effect smoother.

(Right) As you protect your battlements from the enemy wizards, you can pan through forty-five degrees and face the oncoming magic bolts and demons, who appear from the horizon a la Space Harrier..

at such an early stage that it hasn't been snapped up by a company to release it, but it is believed that a few of the larger companies have shown an interest. When Esoterror is released, both Ian and Nick hope to have the frenetic blasting action of the aforementioned Space Harrier, along with a little bit of thinking needed. If they can pull it off, Esoterror is going to be one to watch.

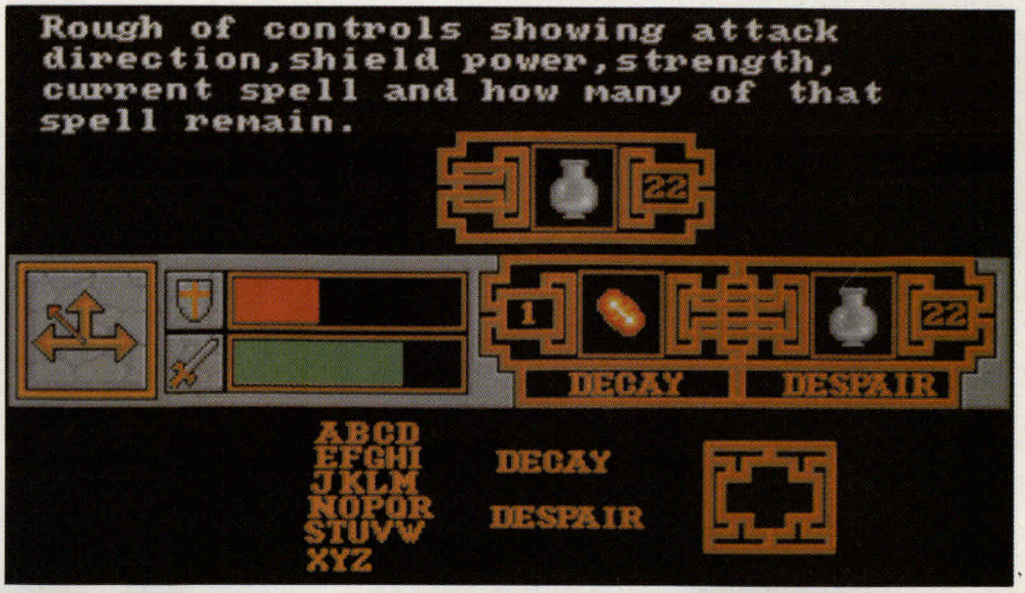
The Men Themselves

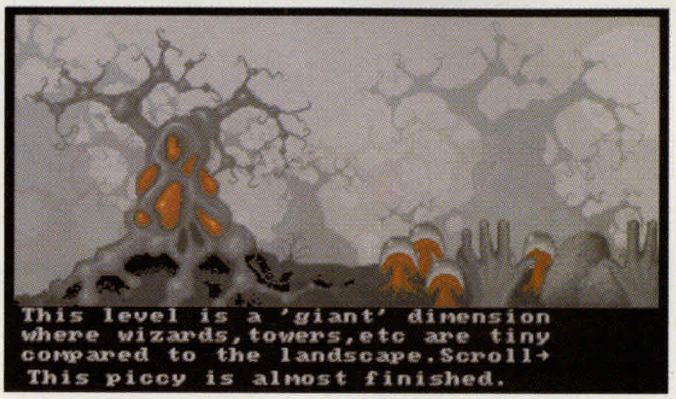
Ian Harling is a very young thirty-six-year-old (his words!) graphic artist, who has provided graphics for Arcana's neat trivia game, Powerplay ('those faces weren't digitised!', he repeatedly insists), the forthcoming Armalyte and Xenodrome for Thalamus, and Lost Patrol, for which he has received critical acclaim before it is even released. Ian uses DPaint II for his work, but admits that most of it is done in his head, and very few preliminary sketches are needed before he begins designing his graphics. In the past, Ian is also something of a novelist, and may be getting one of his books published. He claims that his style is in the vein of Douglas Adams, and rues the day when Adams became famous as, until then, his style of humour had been unique! Still, what he is up to now is a lot better than in the days when he was a French polisher(!) and a musician!

Nick Byron - Game Programmer.

Meanwhile, the man responsible for putting a playable game behind Ian's graphics is Nick Byron, who has been programming games for 'a long, long time'. Nick started programming on various Tandy machines before making his way through a string of Epsons, BBCs and Amstrads when he eventually was introduced to the new wave of 16-bit machines during a brief spell at Arcana, where he met Ian. While at Arcana, Nick worked on Powerplay and did a bit on their mega-project, Mars Cops, before moving on and programming High Steel for Screen 7 (though he stresses that he only programmed it, and didn't design it). Finally, he left to work freelance, and since then has worked on Lost Patrol before starting work on Esoterror, which he is 'very pleased with so far'.

This is an early design for your control panel, which shows your state of health, the number of spells you have collected for later use that can be cycled through using the right mouse button.

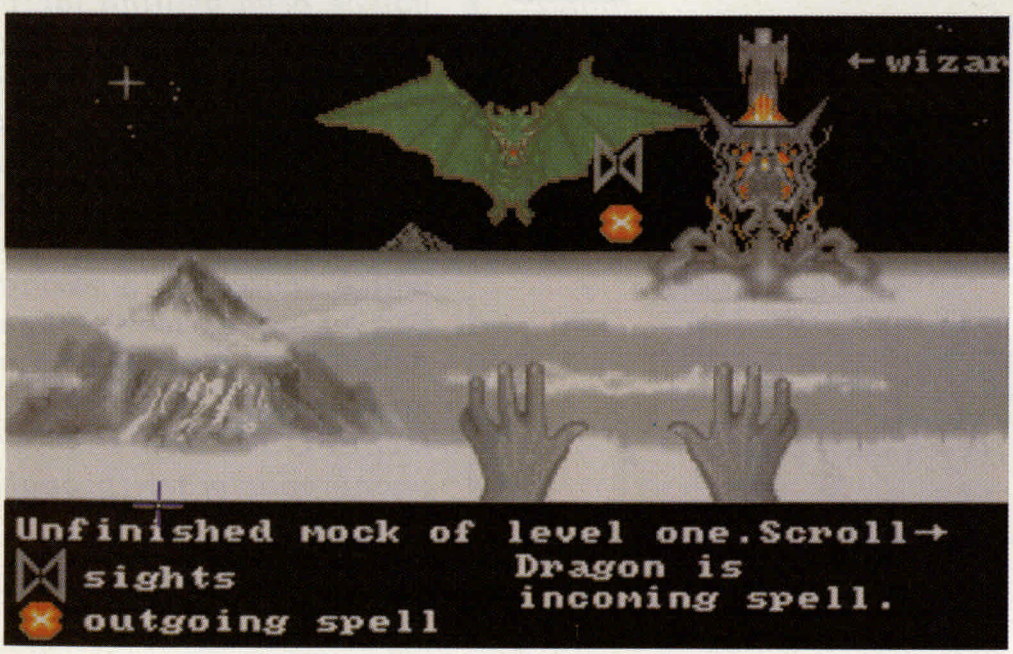




An early mock-up of one of the many landscapes that comprise the land of Esoterror

The Future

Meanwhile, this aspiring company already have several games in the pipeline, and have been approached by several companies for the rights to the next four releases, before they are finished or even story-boarded! B.M's Nightmare is the first one, and is an arcade/adventure starring a cute little teddy bear who comes to life one day, and begins a magical exploration of toyland. Along the way, he will meet toy soldiers, dolls and the like, and the game will feature 'realistic backdrops'. After that, there is a shoot'em-up designed by Villum Bomb, a games-mad acquaintance of the guys, who has come up with a draft for everything he ever wanted in a shoot'em-up. If anything comes of this plan, we could be in for a treat but, at the time of writing, Ian wasn't sure how much they could cram in. Details about the last two games are a little sketchy at the moment, but one of them is a Cinemaware-style game all about South Africa, which Ian is particularly keen to do - but once again, stay tuned for more details.



The wizard's hands are shown throwing and collecting the various spells, and the mouse is used to move your sight-like cursor around the screen.

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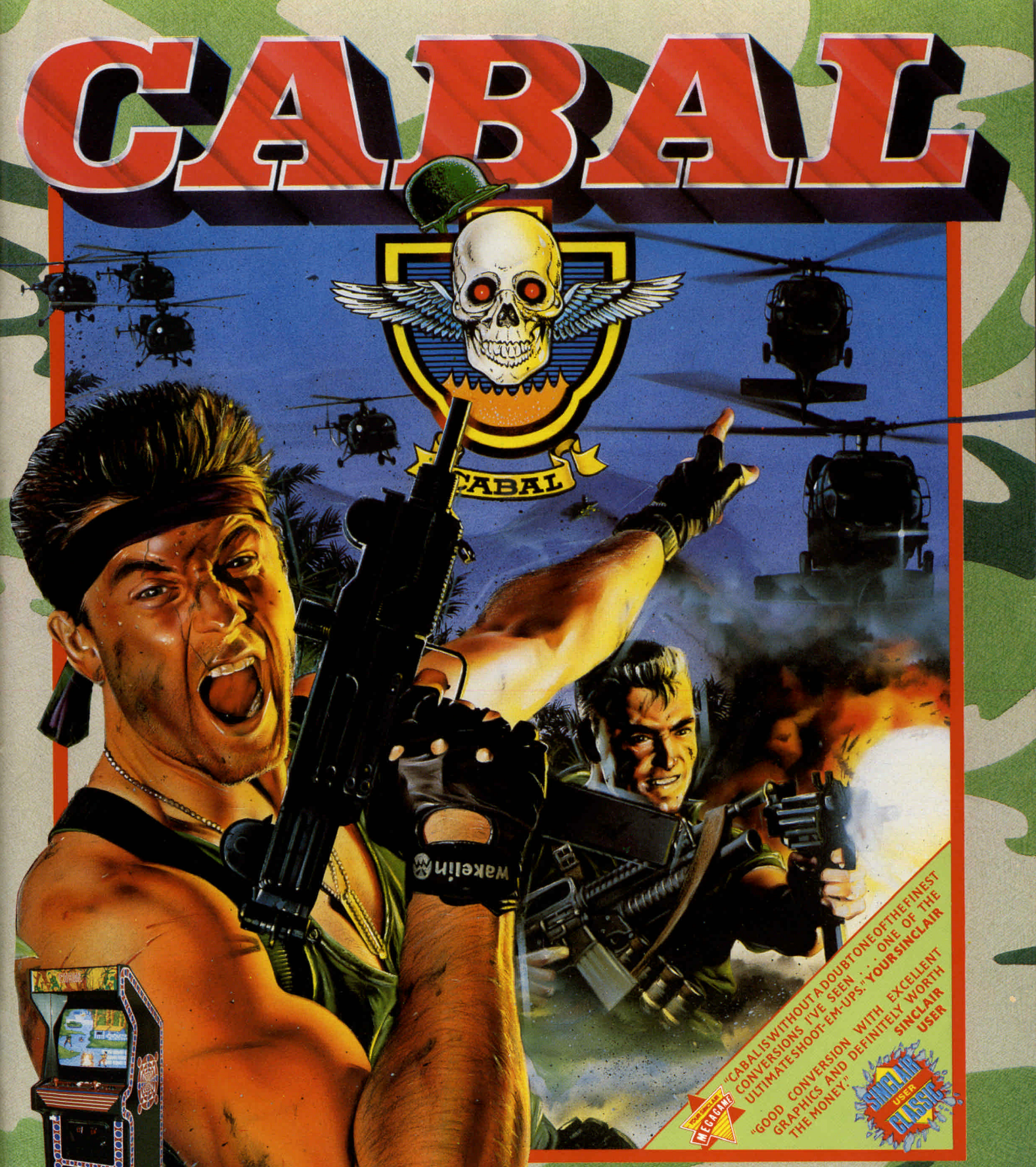

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